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SPEECHES
OF
LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

S P E E C H E S
OF
L O R D
RANDOLPH CHURCHILL

(With a Sketch of his Life)

EDITED BY
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LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

No one who was present in the House of Commons on the 22nd of May, 1874, and heard a speech delivered from a back Ministerial bench by a slim young man of decidedly *blase* appearance, would have guessed what Providence had in store for English politics. The speaker was Lord Randolph Churchill, and he had taken the occasion of a motion on the subject of the selection of Oxford as a military centre to make his maiden speech. He had come in with the new Parliament as member for Woodstock, and was personally unknown in political circles. Born in 1849, he had entered upon his twenty-fifth year, and his chief recommendation to attention was that he was the son of the Duke of Marlborough. There was nothing particular about his speech, though it received from Sir William Harcourt the customary courtly compliment. "I congratulate my noble friend," said Sir William, "upon the promise he has given of obtaining great distinction in this House." That was a commonplace of Parliamentary debate with reference to a new member, and Sir William little thought when he spoke how strong upon him was the spirit of prophecy.

After thus early plunging into debate, Lord Randolph was content to remain silent. For the rest of the session he did not open his mouth, and was by no means a regular attendant upon debate. In the session of 1875 he made his second speech, which immediately attracted attention. Sir Charles Dilke had moved a resolution dooming to extinction the grotesque privileges of small boroughs. Lord Randolph, as the representative of a very small borough, came forward to champion their cause. The House was not very full, as nothing particular was expected. But those

present were startled and delighted by little flashes of humour and a certain freshness of treatment, which were something new in Parliamentary debate. Apparently exhausted with this effort, Lord Randolph again withdrew into the background. For three years he was content to remain in obscurity.

In the session of 1878 he broke out, and, adopting a line of procedure familiar enough since 1880, he convinced all whom it might concern that here was a very original character, delightfully untrammelled by the conventionalities of political life. The occasion arose upon a Bill dealing with local government, brought in by Mr. Sclater-Booth, President of the Local Government Board in Mr. Disraeli's Administration. Lord Randolph Churchill was naturally regarded as a Tory of unimpeachable principles. His father was at the time a member of the Government, occupying the high position of Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland. The House of Commons was not unfamiliar with outbreaks of indiscipline among the Liberals. A great many gentlemen on the left of the Speaker knew better than Mr. Gladstone, or Lord Hartington, or any other personage on the front bench. But for a Conservative to break forth from the ranks and publicly denounce one of his own officers, was a thing at the time absolutely unknown. If it were possible to conceive a Conservative member doubting the wisdom of any course adopted by his leaders, he would be expected at least to remain silent.

This was a pleasing delusion which Lord Randolph Churchill, on this particular night, dispelled for ever. It was noted that he had quitted his accustomed seat on the back bench behind Ministers, and spoke from the corner seat below the gangway. Perhaps I cannot do better than quote some notes, made at the time of this memorable scene, premising that the motion under discussion was that the House should resolve itself into Committee on Mr. Sclater-Booth's County Government Bill.

"Mr. Rylands moved its rejection, on the ground that it was another step in the direction of centralization, against which he had protested when the Prisons Bill was before the House. The motion was seconded by Lord Randolph, who, whilst protesting that he 'did not want to say anything disagreeable,' emphatically declared that he 'had ransacked

the whole arsenal of denunciatory phrases, and had not found any that adequately expressed his estimation—or rather his want of estimation—of the measure.’ Failing perfect success, he was content to characterize the Bill as ‘Brummagem stuff,’ and as being ‘stuffed with all the little dodges of a President of the Local Government Board when he came to attempt to legislate upon a great question.’ He could make some excuse for the Cabinet, for their thoughts had been occupied a long time in other and more important directions. Some weeks ago their minds were engrossed with the difficulty of getting their ships into the Dardanelles. Of late they had been considering how they might get the ships out again. Amid this occupation they had consented to allow Mr. Sclater-Booth to come down to the House and, with all the appearance of a great lawyer, to endeavour to amend, in his little way, the British Constitution.

“The effect of such Ministerial agency was seen in the details of the Bill, which Lord Randolph mercilessly criticized. As for its general conception, he described it as ‘one of those attempts to conciliate the masses by concessions of principles dear to them, which concessions were immediately minimized by the details of legislation. The Government thought that they were deceiving the people, but the only persons deceived were themselves.’ In conclusion, turning towards the members near him, he called upon them to rally round him whilst he ‘raised the last wail of the departing Tory Party, and did his utmost to defeat this most Radical and most democratic measure, this crowning dishonour of Tory principles, this supreme violation of political honesty.’

“Lord Randolph had brought with him a sheaf of notes, which presently got mixed up in inextricable confusion, and added to succeeding passages the charm of adventitious surprise. His oratorical attitude is not especially graceful. Possessing a considerable collection of sheets of notepaper folded lengthwise, it occurred to him that it would be an advantage, when addressing the House, if he carefully inserted a sheet between each finger. Having both hands full, he waved his arms about somewhat after the fashion of a windmill. In moments of comparative repose, his gestures suggest that he is about to perform some conjuring trick,

and his confidentially conversational manner of addressing members aids the illusion.

"But these eccentricities of manner did not seriously militate against the success of a speech full of clever phrases.

" 'I have,' said Lord Randolph, amongst other magnanimous reflections on the portly President, 'no objection to the President of the Local Government Board dealing with such questions as the salaries of inspectors of nuisances ; but I *do* entertain the strongest possible objection to his coming down here with all the appearance of a great law-giver to repair, according to his small ideas and in his little way, breaches in the British Constitution.'

"This is a word picture which leaves little to be filled up. It hits off in a few sentences the salient characteristics of Mr. Sclater-Booth, his pompous appearance and his inadequate ability, his supreme satisfaction with himself and the very different feelings he inspires in others when an accidental impulse converges attention upon him."

This speech naturally enough made a great noise. But Lord Randolph once more appeared satiated with the meed of applause that had followed upon its delivery. He again withdrew from any prominent part in the business of the House of Commons, and was little heard of for the rest of the existence of the Disraelian Parliament. But he never went back to the Ministerial benches above the gangway, and when his opportunity came in 1880 it found him in the freer atmosphere below the gangway.

Lord Randolph Churchill is generally credited with having initiated the proceedings against Mr. Bradlaugh. This is not correct. He was not in his place when Mr. Bradlaugh presented himself, and it is to Sir Henry Wolff that belongs the credit of raising this great question. Mr. Gorst appeared next upon the scene, his collaboration being eagerly welcomed by Sir Henry Wolff. It was only when the debate had proceeded through one or two stages that Lord Randolph joined the two champions of religion, and immediately assumed his natural place as leader. This was not destined to prove a flash-in-the-pan like his speeches on the small boroughs or his attack upon Mr. Sclater-Booth. With that clear insight which in later years and in more responsible positions has been frequently demonstrated, Lord Randolph perceived the enormous political capital that might be made

out of this incident. It was on the face of it a somewhat difficult task to undertake personally to associate Mr. Gladstone with a man of avowed atheistical opinions. But the very difficulty of the task attracted Lord Randolph. He hotly opposed the admission of Mr. Bradlaugh, and he missed no opportunity of bracketing him with Mr. Gladstone and the Liberal party, so attracting towards the latter a portion of the odium in which Mr. Bradlaugh was held by large classes of the community. In this scheme he was ably seconded by Sir Henry Wolff and Mr. Gorst.

Lord Randolph might be supposed to have felt some embarrassment with respect to the leader of his party. Sir Stafford Northcote had, when the Bradlaugh storm first began to patter on the roof of the House of Commons shown no disposition to make the question a party one. He had, in fact, seconded the motion to refer the matter to a Select Committee. That would have fettered an ordinary member of the party. But Lord Randolph Churchill was no ordinary member. He "went for" Sir Stafford Northcote with as light a heart and as free a hand as in earlier years he had assailed Mr. Sclater-Booth. Sir Stafford had, from a party point of view, made a mistake, and Lord Randolph left him to reap the consequences, meanwhile steadily and unresistingly pursuing his own way. In a very short time he was the acknowledged leader of the Conservative party on this question, and Sir Stafford Northcote was obliged to abandon the position he had earlier taken up, and follow the youth below the gangway.

From that time Lord Randolph's position in the House was secured, and he always had an audience when he rose, which was very often indeed. Still, he was not taken seriously. The House listened and laughed and went its way, pleased as it might have been at the theatre or the circus where some merry fellow had diverted it. In the debate on the Closure Resolutions he displayed great ability and untiring energy. But it was in 1884 that he first convinced the public he was something more than the mischievous boy who delighted in shocking the Respectabilities of the House of Commons. In this year he accepted an invitation to contest Birmingham. People laughed at the madness of the notion. But Lord Randolph threw himself into the campaign with characteristic energy. He went down to Birmingham and delivered a

series of speeches which at once attracted attention, not only from their force, but from their reception by the people.

In the House of Commons Lord Randolph had made himself particularly inconvenient to his political pastors and masters, and in May of this year a determined effort was made to snuff him out. He had been nominated Chairman of the National Union of Conservative Associations, and a combined effort was made by the leaders of the party to defeat him. Lord Randolph triumphed, though, by a small majority. The papers were filled with accounts and contradictions of what was taking place in the inner ranks of Conservatism. One thing was very evident. There was hopeless confusion and disunion, and Lord Randolph Churchill was holding his own. In May, 1884, he suddenly flung up his hardly-won chairmanship, and announced his intention of retiring altogether from political life. In the meanwhile, wiser counsels prevailed with the Conservative chiefs. They had come to the conclusion that Lord Randolph was a man rather to be conciliated than defied. Steps were taken by which a reconciliation was brought about. Lord Randolph dined with Lord Salisbury, and peace and harmony prevailed where a week earlier a fierce storm had raged.

But peace was obtained upon Lord Randolph's own terms. He was stronger than ever, and when in the summer of the present year Mr. Gladstone was defeated, and Lord Salisbury was called upon to form an administration, Lord Randolph Churchill secured one of the chief prizes of office. He has not yet had time to establish or lose a reputation at the India Office. But he has lived long enough to make a career which, for brilliancy and strangeness of incident, it would be difficult to parallel.

HENRY W. LUCY.

November 1885.

SPEECHES

OF

LORD RANDOLPH CHURCHILL.

THREE ELECTION ADDRESSES.

1874.

I GLADLY avail myself of the opportunity afforded me by the retirement of your late member, Mr. Barnett, to offer myself as your representative in the coming Parliament.

The politics I profess are strictly in accordance with those of the great leaders of the Conservative Party which the Borough of Woodstock has now so long supported.

Many questions of great political importance which formerly divided the Conservative from the Liberal Party, have passed for the present out of the field of conflict ; their settlement, whether for good or evil, being now stamped on the face of our Statute Book. The essential features of the Constitution of this country continue, however, to defy the attacks of extreme Reformers. All legislation should, in my opinion, be based strictly on the outlines of these features, which are capable of being developed and expanded in accordance with the demands of a progressive age.

Any measures that would ameliorate the condition of the working classes would ensure my best and most earnest assistance. My desire would be to place at their disposal, if it were possible, the common necessities and comforts of life free from the prohibitory impost of taxation.

Some reforms of the systems of rating and local taxation are much required. This subject, however, I hold to be one which should be dealt with largely in one comprehensive measure, and not piecemeal or by small instalments after the manner of recent futile attempts.

Legislation tending to the severance of the Established Church from the State would be vigorously opposed by me. On the other hand, measures which would increase the great sphere of usefulness of the Church of England, and render her more and more the Church of the nation, I would as vigorously support.

With regard to Foreign Policy, it is impossible to blind oneself to the fact that the position of England among foreign nations has deteriorated in the hands of the recent Liberal Administration. While deprecating unnecessary interference in Continental affairs, I am of opinion that in cases where the honour of our country is implicated, the security of the nation can only be attained by a bold and uncompromising policy. To that end I should oppose any large reduction of our naval and military establishments. An economical policy might, however, be consistently pursued, and the efficiency of our forces by land and sea completely secured, without the enormous charges now laid upon the country.

The Colonial Empire of Great Britain ; as it does a field of development for the talent, energy, and labour of the sons of our overburdened island, will continually demand the attention of the Legislature. I would support all efforts which would tend to facilitate the means of emigration, and would at the same time strengthen and consolidate the ties which unite the Colonies with the mother country.

With regard to education, both in this country and in Ireland, I am of opinion that the existing means are capable of a large and liberal development, and that while the rights of conscience should be most sacredly respected, religious teaching should not wholly be forgotten.

The Education Act of 1871 has, on the whole, successfully settled the question, and opened the doors of knowledge to all our countrymen, without regard to sect. I agree with the spirit of that Act, but any alterations that may be needful to ensure its more perfect working will always receive my best consideration.

The principles of true Conservatism I hold to be those of gradual, unceasing progress, adhering strictly to the lines of a well-founded Constitution, and avoiding all violent and unnecessary changes. It is in these principles, in which I firmly believe myself, that I aspire in hopeful confidence to

become the Representative of the Electors of the Borough of Woodstock.

Should I be so fortunate as to be successful in gaining your confidence, I can safely promise that the interests of the Borough will not suffer from any neglect at my hands, and the wishes and views of every individual member of the constituency, of whatever political party, will always receive my best and most earnest attention.

I have the honour to be, Gentlemen,

Yours very faithfully,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

WOODSTOCK, *January 26, 1874.*

1880.

Parliament is about to be dissolved, and I venture again to solicit a renewal of your confidence, which for six years I have enjoyed.

When in 1874 you did me the honour to return me as your representative to the House of Commons, I pledged myself to give a general support to the policy and the principles of the Conservative Party.

And now that I again offer myself as a candidate for the Borough I confidently appeal to you on the same grounds, renewing my former pledges.

The attention of the Parliament which is about to expire has been chiefly occupied by momentous questions of Foreign Policy involving almost the existence of the Empire.

Her Majesty's Government have had to contend not only against the dangerous ambition of a great Foreign Power but also against a determined and powerfully led Opposition at home.

By repeated and unusually large majorities the policy which the Government pursued has been sanctioned by Parliament. A few weeks will surely demonstrate that it has been approved by the country.

In giving a consistent support to that policy I am convinced that I have been carrying out the wishes of a vast majority of this constituency, and I believe that the safety of this Empire can only be secured by a firm adherence on

the part of the country to the course pursued by the present advisers of the Crown.

To their credit it may be stated, that they have hitherto achieved the great result of "peace with honour" without having added perceptibly to the burdens imposed upon the people by taxation.

My opinions on domestic matters have been more than once stated to you during the six years which have elapsed since my election in 1874. The Conservative party have been instrumental in placing on the Statute Book many comprehensive and useful measures. I would instance the Act to Consolidate and Amend the Law relating to Friendly Societies ; the Artisans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act ; the Act Consolidating and Extending the various Laws relating to the Sanitary Condition of the People ; the Act for Modifying and Improving according to Modern Experience the Regulations affecting the Discipline and Control of our Army ; and other Statutes which I need not now particularize.

Her Majesty's Government have now in hand carefully considered measures for the consolidation of the Criminal Code, and for the improvement of the Law of Bankruptcy ; also three most important measures relating to the settlement of landed estates, enlarging the powers of life owners, and reducing the cost of land transfer, to which, as you may imagine from my remarks to you in the autumn, I shall be prepared, if you return me as your Member, to give a most cordial support.

The present condition of Ireland must be a cause of uneasiness to every thoughtful person, and will no doubt occupy the anxious consideration of the new Parliament.

The party led by Mr. Parnell, which has for its object the disintegration of the United Kingdom, must in my opinion, be resisted at all costs.

At the same time, I do not see how the internal peace of Ireland can be permanently secured without a judicious reconsideration of the laws affecting the tenure of land ; and should measures with that object be introduced by her Majesty's Government, I shall be inclined to give them an unprejudiced support.

It must not be forgotten that the successful and wise solution of the difficulties surrounding the question of Irish

education effected by ministers and the Conservative party will greatly contribute to the rapid progress of a future prosperity of the sister Island.

I am in favour of the present system of County Government by Quarter Sessions, but I think that the hands of the magistrates might be strengthened by the addition of elected representatives of the ratepayers.

The contribution from the Imperial revenue to the expenses of Local Government, which was the work of the Conservative party, has no doubt proved a boon to the agricultural community. I should be glad to see this principle further carried out by throwing a portion of the cost of maintenance of highways upon the moneys annually voted by Parliament.

To secure the freedom and to encourage the enterprise of the tenant farmer, it would be expedient to abolish the Law of Distress in its present form.

It appears to me that all matters dealt with by that law should be a subject of agreement between landlord and tenant.

I shall heartily co-operate with any party which brings forward carefully considered measures for the amelioration of the condition of the agricultural labourer, and I think it would be well if powers were given to municipalities and local bodies for the purchase of land to be let in allotments, and for the improvement of the dwellings of this valuable class of men.

Trusting that the principles above enunciated will commend themselves to your consideration, and will secure your approval,

I have the honour to remain,

Very faithfully yours,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

TOCK, *March 9, 1880.*

1885.

The time is near when you will be called upon to express your judgment on the past and your desires for the future. Two schools of political thought strive against each other to win your confidence. The one, composed of those who,

having had under their complete control the Government of the Empire from May, 1880, until June, 1885, are unable to justify their claims upon you by any record of foreign, or colonial, or home achievement, but, contenting themselves with incomplete and misleading extenuation of acknowledged failure, seek to attract you by a renewal of promises, and even bribes, which bitter experience has shown they have neither the capacity nor the strength to fulfil. The other, whose views I share, and whose policy I will endeavour soon, as best I may, personally to uphold among you, appeals to the electoral body in Great Britain and Ireland to confirm the adverse judgment pronounced on June 9, against Mr. Gladstone's Administration by the Parliament which in a few weeks will be dissolved. That judgment, striking and wide-reaching as it was in its immediate results, was literally wrung from a House of Commons the majority of which would have been only too glad to have continued their support of Mr. Gladstone had it not been for the irresistible influence of popular discontent, excited by various causes—Irish troubles, Colonial losses, Indian dangers, costly wars, fruitless sacrifices of many heroes, financial excesses, Parliamentary impotence, imperilled industries, commercial and agricultural depression growing greater and more alarming year by year. All this was expressed by the action of the House of Commons on June 9. Mr. Gladstone's Government, the author of these many and long-continued disasters, fell; that Government in 1880 so popular, so powerful, with such immeasurable opportunities for promoting the peace, progress, and prosperity of the people, fell, and not a voice was raised, either in Parliament or the country, of sympathy for the vanquished, or of mourning over their fall. Mr. Bright will request of you to contribute to restore to power that most unlucky Administration. To this end will be directed all the powers of his unrivalled oratory, his simple but forcible invective, his personal position and experience. But very little of patriotism, very little of self-interest, very little of recollection, reflection, and calculation will compel you to remain outside the influence of that persuasive voice. The British Empire is great and powerful, from the character of its people, the extent of its dominions, and the varied nature of its resources. More than all other Western nations, we can afford to indulge

ourselves in experiment and, indeed, caprice, as regards our system of Government or the direction of our Home and Imperial policy. But there are limits even to the strength of the British Empire, and a repetition of the policy of the last five years will, without doubt, transgress those limits. Yet such will be the inevitable consequence of a restoration to office of the Liberal party, as that party is at present constituted. The old divisions, the irreconcilable differences, personal and political, which all the ascendancy of Mr. Gladstone was unable to compose, much less conceal, while he was Prime Minister, which were the chief cause of the failure of his Administration, are now blazing forth most fiercely, and Mr. Gladstone, with all honesty, warns you that his controlling hand will be stretched forth only for a little time. To this party, which even hatred of the Tories cannot decently unite, which comes before you with such a past, you will be asked to commit for another six years perchance the destinies of the Empire. You cannot yield to this appeal.

The policy of the Tory party is before you :—To regain the friendship of the European Powers which prejudice, presumption, and poltroonery had all but forfeited ; and to use that friendship so as to maintain effectually the united European action by which alone the peace and the liberties of the peoples of the Continent and of these islands can be secured and developed ; to evolve from the region of sentiment such forces as may enable the mother country to tighten the bonds of union between herself and our colonies, and to rear on a practical and permanent basis, for defensive and commercial purposes, that Imperial federation of the subjects of the Queen which many wise and far-seeing minds regard as essential to the perpetuation of our power ; to conciliate by equal laws and by just and firm administration our Irish brethren, now much irritated and estranged, - so that the Union which Nature, as well as policy, has effected may for all time endure ; to place, by material provisions and constructions, the security of our Indian dependency beyond the influence of panic, alarm, or even anxiety, and simultaneously, by careful Parliamentary inquiry, to ascertain how we may most safely and most speedily bring to the strengthening of our Government all that is high and good of the traditions, the intellects, and the

aspirations of the native races ; to give to our rural and agricultural population that machinery of self-government which has been of advantage to our great towns ; to strive, as far as the laws of political economy may permit, to multiply the number of freeholders and occupiers ; to utilize the powers of the House of Commons, in recent years almost forgotten, so as either to effect financial retrenchment and departmental reform, or else to make sure that the present expenditure of the people's money is justifiable and thrifty ; to develop still further the efficiency of Parliament by alterations in its methods of transacting business and in its hours of labour ; to restore public confidence ; to revive commercial enterprise by a patient continuance of good and prudent administration ; in a word, to govern the British Empire by the light of common sense. That is the policy of the Tory party.

Measures are now recommended to you by our opponents which the Tory party will not only not attempt to carry out, but which I hope and believe they will always resolutely oppose. They are the dismemberment of the Empire, under the guise of National Councils, the abolition of the House of Lords, the disestablishment of the Church and the appropriation of its endowments to the support of irreligious education, the compulsory acquisition by local bodies of landed estates for the purposes of arbitrary division, the wholesale plunder of all who have acquired properties, great or small, by thrift or by inheritance, under the names of "ransom" and of "graduated taxation." These and other similar projects, if they are decided by the nation to be wise and prudent, I freely admit must be confided to the hands of Mr. Chamberlain and his friends. I will have none of them, for I know that they mean political chaos and social ruin.

Such, gentlemen, are to my mind the circumstances of the time, as far as they can be conveniently and concisely summarized in an election address. No one can be more convinced than I am that I should be guilty of intolerable presumption if I based my candidature for the Central Division of Birmingham on any other ground than the truth of the political principles I have endeavoured in this document to set forth ; moreover, I am profoundly aware that from many causes, some of them physical, I have feebly

and inadequately served in the House of Commons. My opponent has the immense advantage of long-established possession, amounting in the minds of some almost to prescriptive right ; he is further supported by a highly (perhaps too highly) finished political organization. But the experience of the past and the essential truth of the principles which I will endeavour to sustain may, in all probability, outweigh these considerable forces. The people, in the widest acceptance of the expression, are now, for the first time in the history of England, called upon to decide and define their future. If they are guided by reflection and by knowledge, they cannot err. But if, unmindful of the last five years, they recur, like the constituencies in 1880, for government and for policy to those who have so misled them and betrayed them, I, in common with the party with which for twelve years I have acted, will patiently accept their judgment ; but history will mourn and will wonder long at the blindness and the folly, ay, even the insanity, of a people who, called to the more free and perfect enjoyment of their ancient liberties, deliberately, and in spite of warnings writ large and full, flung away a priceless heritage, and consigned to the grave of the past a great and glorious Empire.

I am, your obedient servant,

RANDOLPH S. CHURCHILL.

INDIA OFFICE, ST. JAMES'S PARK,

Octob. 10.

THE BLESSINGS OF CONSERVATIVE RULE.

(AT WOODSTOCK, MARCH 15, 1880.)

It is exactly six years since I addressed a similar meeting in this Town Hall, and many great and important events have taken place in that interval. I must own I admire the perseverance and courage of the Liberal party in Woodstock. Like true Englishmen they never know when they are beaten. They refuse to recognize such a thing as failure. I thought after the splendid victory which

the Conservative party in this borough won six years ago, that we might have been left in peaceful possession of the field. But no, the Liberals are up again, as lively as ever, and they have brought forward another candidate in the person of Mr. Hall. Now I have no personal difference with Mr. Hall, and I gladly acknowledge his right to contest the representation of this borough; in fact, I compliment him on his good sense and good taste in being ambitious of representing you. I have had the honour of being introduced to him, and I certainly could not desire a better or more worthy opponent. I saw the other day a very interesting document, which has been distributed among the electors, purporting to be a biography of Mr. Hall. Well now, ladies and gentlemen, biographies are always very interesting reading, but I could not help thinking as I read that document that in this respect I had perhaps a slight advantage over Mr. Hall, in that it was not necessary for me to distribute amongst the electors of Woodstock a biography of myself. For many years now the electors of this borough have known me. All my life and actions are within your recollection; good or bad, as the case may be, you have had every opportunity of arriving at a true and accurate judgment; and certainly, if I may recall the many kindnesses I have received from all of you, and the many invaluable friendships which I have formed amongst you, I would almost venture to think that your judgment has not been a harsh one. I cannot say that I altogether regret that on this occasion there is a prospect of a sharp contest in this borough. Very momentous issues are before the constituencies. Now you know small boroughs like this one are often accused by their enemies of being apathetic in political affairs, and of want of independence of opinion. There cannot be a doubt that in the future, particularly when the Liberal party return to power, whatever time that may be, there will be a very dangerous attack made on the existence of small constituencies; and when that time comes, whoever may have the honour of representing you, be it myself or be it Mr. Hall, will be able to say that, far from ever being apathetic on political questions, or far from taking no interest in the controversies which agitate other constituencies, the electors of Woodstock take the keenest interest

in the affairs of the Empire at home and abroad, and that they are a body of men trained, exercised, and skilful in political discussion.

CONSERVATIVE FIN 2.

Well, gentlemen, the six years which have elapsed since 1874 have been critical and trying times for the community. The extraordinary prosperity which distinguished the former years had begun to decline when the Conservative administration succeeded to power. Over-speculation, unhealthy commercial excitement, rash and improvident enterprise, which marked the years of office of the Liberal administration, and which, I must say, I think was in a great measure stimulated by Mr. Gladstone's sensational finance, had produced an inevitable reaction, and a general collapse of credit. This was one of the first difficulties with which the Conservative Government had to contend. The consequent depression of trade, the succession of unfavourable seasons, which culminated last summer, were the cause of a declining revenue and successive deficits. Well, gentlemen, in spite of all this, what do we find? Why, the taxes borne by the country are not one penny higher, and are as easily borne as in any year of Mr. Gladstone's wonderful financial administration, which I should be the last to decry. Well, but my opponents will say, that is all very well, but the Conservative Government don't pay their debts. Now, is that so? Conservative finance is the favourite butt of the Opposition; but Sir Stafford Northcote, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has managed, during these six years of unexampled depression and general distress, to pay off eighteen millions of the National Debt; and not only has he done that, but he has also managed to contribute from the Imperial revenue nearly one million a year to the expenses of local government; and, in addition, he has relieved the county rates from the heavy expense of the maintenance of the prisons; and he has done all this without imposing one single sixpence heavier taxation than what the country paid during the tenure of power by the Liberal party. But then my opponents will probably say to me, "Oh yes, it is all very well; but you have eight millions of accumulated deficit to pay for." Well, what do these eight millions represent? They represent extra-

ordinary expenditure incurred by the Government, or rather by the country, in carrying out a policy which provided—at a very dangerous crisis—for the defence of the empire and of British interests, and for the security of our colonies, and for the defence of the frontiers of our Indian Empire. And mark this, gentlemen, that by the end of 1885 all that extraordinary expenditure, the benefit of which will be reaped by posterity, as well as by ourselves, will be paid off, will have been liquidated, without the imposition of a single additional sixpence. Perhaps I ought not to have said one single sixpence, because the Chancellor of the Exchequer certainly did give notice the other night of a new tax, but it was one which would not affect you or me, because it is a slight increase in the probate duty. The fact will be this : if any of you in this room may have a friend who is likely to leave him a couple of thousand pounds, instead of having to pay £40, you will have to pay £44. I know this, if any of you gentlemen are likely to leave me £2,000 I will very gladly pay £44 instead of £40. Of course, if the sum was larger, if very rich successions are involved, the expenses of succession will be higher ; and it seems to be a fair principle of making the rich pay, and sparing the poor as far as possible. Now those are the facts of Conservative finance, and I leave them to my opponents to make what they can of them. I am content to rest the case of the Government and the Conservative party on those facts.

THE WORKING MAN'S FRIEND.

We are always being told that the Government has done nothing for the labouring classes. I have no hesitation in saying this is a most unfounded accusation. For whose benefit was the Friendly Societies Act passed ? Why, for the labouring classes ; and the effect of this measure is that the weekly earnings of the labouring classes, which, by the means of Friendly Societies, are saved up and laid by to provide for them in sickness, old age, or death, are now placed under Government supervision, and, to a certain extent, under Government control, so that any maladministration or mismanagement by the officers of Friendly Societies of these invaluable funds is, to a great extent, prevented and provided against, as far as it is humanly possible to prevent it ; and any labouring man can now, if

The Blessings of Conservative Rule.

he takes the trouble, easily ascertain what is the exact financial position of any Friendly Society to which he belongs or wishes to belong. Well now, that was not a sensational measure; perhaps it is not a measure that could commend itself to the Liberal party; but it is one of those quiet measures of doing good for which the Conservative Government and the Conservative party may claim credit at your hands. I should like to ask you what was the nature of the Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act. Why, gentlemen, by this Act the fearful and terrible holes and tenements in which many hundreds and thousands of our valuable industrial classes were living in our large towns were swept away, and new wholesome airy dwellings were provided for them. I am one of those who think that the benefits of this Act might easily be beneficially extended to the agricultural labourer by giving similar powers to local boards and rural municipalities, and that the duty of repairing dilapidated or worn-out cottages shall be a duty entrusted to local boards and corporations, and should not be left, as it is now, to the caprice or the capability of any individual landlord. I have great hopes that as the Artizans' and Labourers' Dwellings Act is producing great benefits among these classes in our big towns, the principles of the measure may before long be extended to our rural municipalities.

SMALL HOLDINGS.

Since I have been round seeing some of my old friends here, I have heard people say, "You did not keep the promises you made at the last election." Well, I said to the gentleman who said that to me, "What promises have I not kept, because you must let me make an explanation." He said, "You promised you would give each of us an allotment." That is a mistake. I said I would support, and did support, any measure which was brought into the House of Commons which would provide that the labouring classes should each of them have an allotment of rather larger size if necessary than they have at present; and my friend, who is a great Liberal—and I am proud to call him my friend—Sir Charles Dilke, brought in a measure in the first session of this Parliament which gave to rural districts like the Corporation of Woodstock powers to raise

money upon the security of the rates for the purchase of land in the neighbourhood of villages and towns which could be let to the labouring classes as allotments. I supported the measure, and I intend to support it again. But if I had come to you and said I would give each of you an allotment, I should have been telling you a most fearful lie, because I have not got an acre of land belonging to me, and therefore, though it might be my wish, and it is, to see you all provided for in that respect, at any rate those who want it, it is out of my power to take land and provide myself for the wants of the labouring classes; but as far as my voice and vote go in the House of Commons, they have been given, and will be given, in favour of measures to this end.

A GLASS OF GOOD BEER.

Again, to whom, I should like to know, are the working classes of this country indebted for the liberty which they enjoy of refreshing themselves from time to time after their heavy daily toil with a glass of good English beer? Why, to the Tory party, and to the Tory party alone. If the Liberals came into office, you will soon have passed into law Sunday Closing Acts and Permissive and Local Option Bills, which will tyrannize over the liberty of, and further restrict the few privileges and luxuries enjoyed by the working classes. Why, there are Liberals who advocate these measures who assert that the great majority of the working classes of this country are habitual drunkards, and unable to take care of themselves, and must be restrained by law. Gentlemen, the Tory party have always strenuously opposed these assertions and these principles, and will continue to resist them, and you owe it to them that such measures, tyrannical and unjust, have not been passed yet.

THE COUNTY FRANCHISE.

Well, the assimilation of the county and borough franchise is a very important question, and one which virtually affects the electors of this borough, for the passing into law of this measure will certainly put an end to the existence of Woodstock and other small constituencies. The position of the Tory party on this matter is very clear. We have always contended that it was in-

expedient to have a fresh Reform Act so soon after the comprehensive Reform Act which was passed twelve years ago. We said that it was a dangerous thing for a country to be always tampering with and tinkering up the electoral leases on which our Parliamentary representation reposes, and we also said that there did not appear to exist among the unenfranchised population of our counties that burning, irresistible desire for the franchise. There was no agitation on this subject which would justify immediate legislation. But the Conservative party have never said that they feared the results of giving a vote to the agricultural labourer. I have had some experience of the agricultural labourer, and I certainly have no reason to complain. But listen to what Mr. Hall said at Tackley the other night on this question in his first speech to the electors of Woodstock, in a stronghold of the agricultural labourers, and in a place, where I am told, Mr. Hall has a good many to sympathize with—I mean Tackley. What does he say to them on this question of the assimilation of the county and borough franchise? I took his words from the *Oxford Chronicle*. Mr. Hall said:—"The extension of the county franchise he knew was a subject on which many Liberals felt earnestly. As a Liberal he was prepared to support it, but he could not look forward to it with the anxiety he did to the enfranchisement of the borough populations. He thought it would enfranchise a large mass who, unfortunately, at the present time, were not really fit for its exercise." When I read this, I said to myself, "Mr. Hall, you certainly have brought your pigs to the wrong market." Who are the principal and the most powerful portion of the electors of the borough of Woodstock? The agricultural labourers. And Mr. Hall comes down here, and in one breath asks the agricultural labourers for their vote, and at another breath tells them that they belong to a class not fit to have a vote, which is certainly neither kind nor complimentary, and I think it would be as well if some explanation were demanded on that point of Mr. Hall's.

DISASTER.

I feel I am taking up too much of your time, and there are many important matters relative to the land

and agriculture which I must postpone to another night. I see my opponent, in his address, like the rest of his party, dilates on the disasters which have come upon England during the six years of Conservative administration. Gentlemen, where are the disasters? what are they? Was the battle of Ulundi a disaster when the ferocious and yelling Zulus fell back dismayed before the undaunted squares of British soldiers? Was that a disaster? Was the capture of the cruel king Cetewayo a disaster? Was the destruction of the Zulu army—that manslaying machine—and the consequent security of our fellow-countrymen in South Africa, was that a disaster? Was the Treaty of Gundamuk a disaster, which obtained for us the permanent custody of the keys of our Indian Empire? Was the gallant General Roberts's march on Cabul, and his glorious repulse of the innumerable hordes of fanatical Afghans who assaulted the defences of Sherpur, were those disasters? Was it a disaster, I ask, when 6,000 Indian troops were brought to Malta—thus proving to European nations and the world that England, in addition to her brave soldiers, had at her command thousands of courageous troops who would fight at her call loyally and devotedly for the honour of the British flag. Gentlemen, was it a disaster when the British fleet forced the passage of the Dardanelles, and, anchoring in the Golden Horn, arrested under the walls of Constantinople the march of the Russian armies, and snatched the victim from the Cossack's grasp. Was that a disaster, tell me, electors of Woodstock?

Gentlemen, as I said before, I am glad there is an election contest this time in Woodstock. I am very glad that the electors of Woodstock will have an opportunity of pronouncing in an open and unmistakable manner their opinion upon these great questions. You know there is a party in this country—a powerful party—a party led by men of eminence and ability, who will tell you that we ought to confine our attention to affairs at home, and that the greatest praise which can be won by an English Minister, is that foreign affairs shall not be heard of during his tenure of office. I ask you, are these your opinions? Do you think it possible for any country like our own, with its extended foreign possessions, possessions which exist in every quarter of the globe, with its

innumerable, intimate and delicate relations with every civilized and uncivilized race, do you think such a doctrine is practical, rational, or wise? You and I, in common with our fellow-subjects, are the inheritors of a mighty empire—an empire which represents to you and me, and to millions more, that priceless inheritance of civil and religious liberty which is the proud privilege of Englishmen, and which we value and enjoy, and on the maintenance of which depends the happiness of humanity. But you must not rest satisfied with the mere charm of possession; you must show yourselves equal to the task of maintaining it. Some empires have been constructed by the marriages of Royal Houses, other empires have been built up by the decay of neighbouring states, but the British Empire was won by the sword of your forefathers, and if you wish to preserve it with all its attendant blessings, the motto on your sword must be “Ready, aye ready.” On these questions, electors of Woodstock, I am confident that you, laying aside all local considerations, all trifling questions, and all petty matters, conscious of the great responsibility which weighs on each individual member, fully prepared to discharge that solemn duty, will record your votes on the polling day as Englishmen, as patriots, and as brave men. If you do so, I have no fear for the result.

THE BRADLAUGH QUESTION.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 24, 1880.

It is my opinion that the question whether Mr. Bradlaugh should be allowed to take the oath is not one which can with any propriety be relegated to a Select Committee. There is nothing complicated in the nature of the question. There is no evidence to be taken in regard to matters of fact; it seems to me to be a matter of principle, which ought to be decided by what Lord Beaconsfield once well described as the “unerring instinct of the House of Commons.” The question, although a grave one, is a very simple one. It is, Shall the oath of allegiance be administered to an individual who has thought it his duty to

publicly declare beforehand, *coram populo*, that the oath of allegiance can have no binding effect upon his conscience, and who tells the House of Commons that the oath is based upon the lowest of superstitions, upon a mummary and a mockery, which are degrading and absurd? That is the position Mr. Bradlaugh has taken up; and I maintain that if the House allows him to take the oath, they will, to a certain extent, acquiesce in Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions. In this way they would acquiesce. By such a proceeding the House would admit that one of its own members might with right, law, and justice on his side call God to witness that he was a true and loyal subject, and at the same time proclaim that the God whom he called upon was to him an incomprehensible nonentity, and that he would not so call upon Him if it were not for the civil disabilities which would otherwise attach to him.

Moreover, he adds, that the taking of an oath cannot affect in any degree his conduct as a member of Parliament. Now, what is the natural result of such an admission? It appears to me that the House will be unable to preserve solemn forms in the efficacy of which it does not sincerely believe, and they cannot sincerely believe solemn forms which they allow to be trampled upon and held up to public scorn by one of their own members. If the House allows the oath of allegiance to be thus treated, and if the House admits that members of the House may declare with all the authority which a Parliamentary position gives, with right, law, and justice on their side, that the words, "So help me, God," are merely a ridiculous and superstitious invocation, utterly devoid of any moral force, then the whole connection between the proceedings of Parliament and a Divine sanction is in danger, and the idea—I may almost say the faith—which has for centuries animated the House of Commons, that its proceedings are under the supervision and will be guided by the wisdom of a Beneficent Providence, loses all its force. It cannot be doubted, and history could prove, that when persons, and even nations, suffered what are declared to be their most cherished convictions to be trampled upon, insulted, and held up to public derision they cannot be far from abandoning those convictions. I do not know how it may be with the Liberal party, but from

the opinions I have been able to gather from many quarters, I am convinced that by a great majority of the people of the country the triumph of Mr. Bradlaugh in this matter will be regarded with feelings of shame and grief. It is not for that, that the Liberal party is placed in a position of such power, and has the confidence of the country given to it; and although the House never has been, and I trust never will be, a place for the discussion of matters of abstract theology or questions of doctrine or dogma, still, on the other hand, hon. members opposite are not returned in such numbers in order that the House of Commons may become a place where the solemn rights and practices of the Christian religion may be safely derided and the existence of a God publicly and with scorn derided.

It is a question which must be decided upon general principles chiefly, it is a question in which very great and very vital principles are involved, and we must not allow pettifogging technicalities to be introduced into the discussion by law officers who are apt to confuse the proceedings of this House with the proceedings of the Old Bailey. It has been the proudest boast of the Commons of England that, however great their political differences may be, they are at any rate united in one sentiment—that of loyalty to the Crown, and they gladly testify to that fact when they take the oath of allegiance at the table. But Mr. Bradlaugh's ideas of loyalty are in one respect analogous to his ideas on religion. They are widely different from ours. In a book which he has written, and which he has endeavoured to circulate far and wide, entitled "*The Impeachment of the House of Brunswick*," and which I observe has reached a sixth edition, Mr. Bradlaugh has laid down the principle that it is within the inherent competence of the House, without any precedent transaction to justify it, and on its own motion, to vote the deposition of the Royal Family, and to substitute any other form of government which may seem good. I would quote one passage as a fair specimen of the contents of that book:

"I loathe these small German breast-bestarred wanderers, whose only merit is their loving hatred of one another. In their own land they vegetate and wither unnoticed. Here we pay them highly to marry and perpetuate a pauper prince

race. If they do nothing, they are good ; if they do ill, loyalty gilds the vice till it looks like virtue."

From such sentiments it may be seen that if Mr. Bradlaugh were admitted to take the oath he might base his Parliamentary career on principles which all other hon. members are precluded from entertaining by their belief in the sanctity of that very oath, but which he can adopt in the House and the country with all possible freedom, because he has declared beforehand that in his eyes the oath is a mere idle form which cannot bind his conscience, and therefore will not govern his principles or guide his conduct. It may be that, even if that is true, no evil can arise from the action of one man ; but I take a different view. The oath testifies alike to the sense of loyalty and of religion on the part of a member, both of which are derided by Mr. Bradlaugh ; and if, under guidance of the Prime Minister, the House admits him by allowing him to take the oath, it becomes an absolute impossibility that either loyalty or religion can occupy in the minds of members of Parliament or of the English people the same lofty, unshaken, and unassailable position which they have occupied without interruption down to the present day. I cannot think that that will be the policy of the Liberal party ; but although it is of course possible that the Conservative party and others who agree with the hon. member for Portsmouth (Sir H. Drummond Wolff) may be placed in a minority on the question, still they will have the satisfaction of feeling that in the sentiments which they uttered, and in the action which they took upon it, they were in complete accord with an overwhelming majority of the English people.

The right hon. member for Birmingham (Mr. John Bright) seems to think hon. members on the Opposition benches are making an unnecessary fuss over what he emphasized as their oath as distinguished from what he called his affirmation ; but what would the right hon. gentlemen have felt had Mr. Bradlaugh said : "Well, as I object to a superstitious oath, and as one must be a Quaker or a Moravian to make an affirmation, I hereby declare that I am a member of the Society of Friends, and claim to affirm accordingly ?" Would he not have been outraged, and would not the whole Society of Friends have been outraged by such a declaration ?

There would have been a most withering denunciation on the part of the right hon. gentleman of such a proceeding. Yet the present case is still more serious. The hon. member for Northampton claims to take the oath, and in doing so he outrages all hon. gentlemen who believe in its sanctity and efficacy, just in the same way as he would outrage the Society of Friends by declaring himself to be one of their body for the mere purpose of taking his seat in the House, and claiming to make the affirmation. In this case the hon. member for Northampton outrages the feelings not merely of members of the Church of England or of the Society of Friends, but of all men and women who believe in an Immortal God. As for the rights of the constituents of Northampton, I am not disposed to recommend the House to be very much exercised in the matter. They did not seat this gentleman in the dark. It is quite true that the morality and the piety of Mr. Bradlaugh are guaranteed to them by the hon. member for Bristol (Mr. Samuel Morley), who is much respected by the great Nonconformist body for his sense of religion and his piety; and it is equally true that the loyalty of Mr. Bradlaugh is guaranteed to them by the right hon. gentleman the member for Clackmannanshire (Mr. Adam); at the same time, as the right hon. gentleman the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster told the House the other night, the whole history of this man, political, literary, and religious, was placed before the constituents of Northampton during the heat of an election contest in the minutest detail. I have been told that Mr. Bradlaugh flaunted his opinions before the constituents who deliberately elected him as their member. On their heads, therefore, must rest the responsibility of any action which this House may take. The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster has tried to alarm the House by citing the case of John Wilkes; but will the right hon. gentlemen assert that there is the slightest analogy between John Wilkes and Mr. Bradlaugh? The House should not suffer itself to be deluded by such chimeras.

I hope I shall not be deemed presumptuous if I venture to make an appeal to the right hon. gentleman at the head of Her Majesty's Government. I have a conviction that there is not any member of the House who views Mr. Bradlaugh's opinions with greater horror and aversion than the First Lord of the Treasury. I will appeal to the right hon.

gentleman to abandon the position he has somewhat lightly taken up, and not seek to evade a great question by a transparent and obvious device. The right hon. gentlemen has behind him a great majority, which in his hands may, no doubt, be the means of promoting the best and the highest interests of the country. "Do not," I will say to the right hon. gentleman, "let it be in our power to say that the first use you made of that powerful weapon was to mark it with an indelible stain, and that the first time you led the Liberal party through the lobby in this new Parliament was for the purpose of placing on those benches opposite an avowed Athiest, and a professedly disloyal person."

PARLIAMENTARY REFORM.

(EDINBURGH, DECEMBER 20, 1883.)

A great subject amongst Liberal orators at present is that of Parliamentary reform. It is true that their opinions on this question do not coincide : Lord Hartington is of opinion that the subject of Parliamentary reform has not been adequately considered by the country. Mr. Chamberlain, on the other hand, declares that it has been considered a great deal to much. Lord Hartington seems to think that Ireland is rather an awkward difficulty, but Mr. Chamberlain thinks there is no difficulty at all, and that the more Parnellites the better. Lord Hartington seems to like the property qualification ; Mr. Trevelyan is all for the abolition of the property qualification. It would be as well if these eminent political guides were to make up their minds before bewildering the country with discordant gabble, and until they have done so, the country and the Conservative party will not weary themselves on the subject of Parliamentary reform. Other subjects are of far greater importance ; as, for instance, our position in Egypt and our rule in Ireland ; and it is on those questions the issues of the next general election will have to be fought.

THE FRANCHISE.

In reference to the subject of Parliamentary reform, it is absolutely essential that the mind of the country be

comparatively free from other cares, and that the Parliament which has to deal with it be elected for that purpose. The assimilation of the county and borough franchise was not before the country at the last general election; and the best answer to the statement that the mind of the country was made up, is to be found in Lord Hartington's avowal, that the question was not sufficiently considered by the country in 1832 and 1867. The unenfranchised classes wanted the franchise very much. There were intense political excitement, imposing demonstrations, gigantic petitions, considerable disturbances, and dangerous riots. To have refused to enlarge the electorate at such a time might have produced a revolution, but there is no such fear now. There is at present no political excitement, and although the existing electoral arrangements are imperfect and anomalous, they are not so imperfect and anomalous as to excite any very general or deep dissatisfaction, or to prevent the grievances of any class being heard and represented and considered by Parliament. The anomalies and imperfections which do exist are not connected with the limits placed upon the right of voting, but are entirely connected with the distribution of seats, and with the arrangement of the borough boundaries. The more glaring anomalies of our present system are to be found in the restricted borough boundaries, and that is entirely due to the action of the Liberal party. Mr. Disraeli, in 1867, attempted to deal with this question, but was met with opposition by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. Two questions are involved in the demand for Parliamentary reform—first, the demand for equality of franchise between town and country, put forward by Mr. Chamberlain and the Birmingham caucus; and secondly, the demand for equality of franchise on the part of large urban centres of population excluded from the household franchise by restricted boundaries, and on the part of large centres of population insufficiently represented owing to the prevalence of small boroughs with one member and with two members. With respect to the demand for equalization of franchise in town and country, I can only say that at present there is no anomaly, and if we are to obliterate in our legislation all distinction between town and country; if we assert that the society in towns is not infinitely more educated, intelligent, and progressive than society in the country, and that the average inhabitant of

the town and country are absolutely the same, we shall be legislating on a principle which is against common-sense ; we shall be destroying the proper balance of political power, and creating an anomaly infinitely more dangerous than any which now exists, and we shall be creating it gratuitously. I defy Mr. Chamberlain and his caucus to stimulate the slightest genuine political excitement in the purely agricultural districts, and I refuse to be deceived by such miserable wire-pulling humbug demonstrations as those to which we have been treated recently at Leeds, London, and Bristol.

REDISTRIBUTION.

The other portion of that great question of reform, namely, redistribution, is far more important and pressing, and my opinion is that a Parliament should be specially elected to deal with it. My views on Parliamentary reform are that the assimilation of the county and borough franchise is uncalled for, premature, inexpedient, unnatural, and therefore highly dangerous. Redistribution is urgent, loudly demanded and must be taken in hand ; and Sir Charles Dilke was more than right when he said at Glasgow the other day that redistribution is the key of the whole political future. With regard to the present political balance of power, is it wise or prudent to give to a country population—admittedly inferior in wealth, intelligence, and independence to the town population—that predominance which at the present moment boroughs possess ? The interests of town and country are always diverse and often clashing. Now as to the question of minority representation I have no hesitation in giving my opinion that a special representation of minorities is all humbug. All that minorities have to do if they wish to be represented is to convert themselves into majorities. I trust that the Conservative party will resolve to support the abolition of that most foolish, silly, foreign device for the representation of minorities. The motives of the Government in bringing forward the question of Parliamentary reform are the lowest that could be conceived. In the first place, they are dissatisfied with the British farmer, and hope to overwhelm him with the agricultural labourer. In the second place, their frantic cry is intended to divert the attention of the country from their miserable legislative failures. The

Government do not seek for the welfare of the nation; they care less than anything for the class concerning whom they are so specious and so loud. It is their one hope that on the question of Parliamentary reform they may be able to secure that tiny modicum of unanimity which they consider necessary to enable them to retain those highly remunerative offices which they have so disgraced, and that patronage and power which they have so scandalously mis-used. I pray that the ill-omened and sinister machination may meet with the reward it deserves, and that Edinburgh, in common with the rest of the constituencies, will contrast the performances of the Government with the promises and the pledges of Midlothian, and that they will refuse to renew to those unmasked impostors that confidence which they so unblushingly demand.

"ALL IS VANITY."

(AT BLACKPOOL, JANUARY 24, 1884.)

Two years have elapsed since I had the honour of addressing a Lancashire audience. At that time I endeavoured to describe to the electors of Manchester the true state of Ireland, and the probable effect upon that country and upon our own of the mixture of treachery and incapacity which poisoned the councils of Mr. Gladstone's Administration. The truth of the remarks I then made was very soon afterwards signally illustrated by the release from prison of the leaders of the revolutionary party in Ireland, the bargain struck between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell for mutual political support (more popularly known as the Kilmainham Treaty), and the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke by the more active section of Mr. Gladstone's new allies.

"A MONSTROUS AND DANGEROUS COALITION."

This crowning atrocity gave a slight shock to the political association between Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Parnell. It even produced a temporary estrangement during the passing of the Coercion Bill. But this un-

pleasantness soon wore off. The parties led by these two great men have too much in common to be alienated from each other for long. General destruction and all-round plunder are alike their pleasure, their duty, and their pride. Mr. Gladstone has a weakness for effecting his objects by Act of Parliament; the Irish a slight preference for the more rapid and startling dynamite. A little difference as to method, you see, but a precisely similar result. These two parties are now at this moment preparing to meet Parliament with a demand for a repeal of the Union. Mr. Parnell, with his customary candour, will use the word "Repeal;" Mr. Gladstone, with his customary ambiguity, will describe the policy as an assimilation of Irish and English political rights, and as the placing in the hands of the people of the local government of the country. It is a monstrous and dangerous coalition we have to face; it strikes at the vitals of the Empire. The Union of England, Scotland, and Ireland is the nerve-centre of the wide-spread dominions of the Queen. If you sever it, the Empire is dead; if you injure it, the Empire is paralyzed. It is to Lancashire that the eyes of the Tory party are hopefully turned. Lancashire, we confidently anticipate, will lead the van of the army of resistance. We remember that Lancashire, first of all English counties, discerned the germs of this movement in 1868, when Mr. Gladstone, flying like an unkennelled fox from one corner of the country to another, was hurled down by your Southern Division. Down through electoral space he fell, nor stayed his fall till he reached the distant borough of Greenwich. Down, too, at that time fell Lord Hartington, his accomplice, whom an obscure village in Wales received and nourished. We remember that but for Lancashire in 1868 the Tory party was almost gone, and by those memories we call upon you now to rouse yourselves to the fight, and to rally the British counties against the Prime Minister and his rebel allies. Soon, very soon, this Parliament—"the best of all modern Parliaments"—will be scattered to the winds, its members scurrying helter-skelter about the country: soon the destinies of this Parliament will be in the hands of the leaders of the Opposition, and if, for once, they can nerve themselves to a struggle, and seize upon golden moments, Mr. Gladstone's days as a Minister of the Crown are numbered.

"THE FALSE AND TREACHEROUS KHEDIVE TEWFIK."

It is not only in Ireland that your Imperial interests are imperilled. In Egypt, a tremendous storm is gathering. I cannot believe that the anarchy and the misery and the insecurity which now distract that country and threaten the entire civilization of the East with ruin will be tolerated much longer by the Powers of Europe. The original object of our expedition to Egypt was distinctly immoral and base. It has tainted and corrupted all our efforts to restore order, and still remains a withering blight and curse. I said at Edinburgh what I have said all along, that the Khedive Tewfik was a person unfit from his character and by his actions to be supported by Great Britain. This position has never been seriously contested either by the Government or by the leaders of the Opposition, but within the last few days has received a most remarkable confirmation. The name of "Chinese Gordon" is a household word, not only in Egypt, but here at home, for courage, honesty, and truth. A statement from General Gordon appeared in all the papers the other day on the crisis in the Soudan. That high-souled officer recommended that Nubar Pasha should be placed at the head of the Egyptian Government. And what was the great danger he saw to Nubar Pasha's influence for good? One danger and one alone—the intrigues of the Khedive Tewfik, the false and treacherous character of the Khedive Tewfik. That was the danger against which he warned his countrymen. General Gordon has just left this country for the Soudan with dictatorial authority conferred upon him by the English Government. What was the one condition which he made, the *sine quâ non* on which he insisted, before undertaking his Herculean task? One condition and one only—that he should be entirely independent of the Khedive Tewfik, should receive no orders from him, should be brought into no connection with him, but that all his instructions and all his authority should emanate from Downing-street, and not from the Palace of Cairo. Could I, I ask you, could I have obtained a more tremendous corroboration of my charges against the Khedive Tewfik than this irrefutable testimony of General Gordon? I said at Edinburgh what I have said all along,

that the Egyptian war was a bondholders' war, and I say now that our occupation of Egypt is a bondholders' occupation. Is there any one so simple as to suppose that we should have interfered with the movements of Arabi had there been no such things as Egyptian bonds? There are those who dare to tell you that the protection of the Suez Canal was the object of our expedition to Egypt. A more erroneous statement was never made. The Suez Canal was at no time in the smallest danger. The Suez Canal will always take care of itself. The whole world, the East and the West, are equally and mutually interested in the freedom of the Suez Canal. No, you will not be misled by such an obvious and transparent fiction. It was bonds and bondholders and no other power which diverted Mr. Gladstone, greatly hesitating, from his path ; which impelled the British fleet to Alexandria. It was bonds and bondholders only which commanded the British troops. Now, I pray you mark this. England has never before interfered with the internal affairs of other nations on account of bonds or debts which might be owing to her people. We have always looked upon these matters as altogether outside the range of active Government interference. The Southern States of America took a lot of money from us which they never paid. Did we go to war with the United States? The wretched, cheating Republics of Honduras, Costa Rica, and Venezuela ruined an immense number of British subjects. Did we occupy those countries with our forces? I am afraid to say how many people in this country lost their all when Turkey repudiated her debts. The Government of England took no action. It has been left for Mr. Gladstone's Government to depart from this wise and time-honoured tradition, for this Government of Mr. Gladstone, whose cardinal principle of foreign policy was non-intervention ; it has been left for them to intervene, and intervene actively and violently, and on the side of oppression as against the cause of freedom, in the one particular sphere in which till now non-intervention had been acquiesced in by both parties in the State. But I do not ask you to take my assertion as sufficient proof of this accusation. I refer you to Lord Granville's despatch in 1882. Then, in answer to Sir E. Malet's inquiry as to whether the Egyptian Government might be allowed to superintend the expenditure of all those taxes which had not been

assigned to the bondholders, Lord Granville refuses his consent, "regard being had," he says, "to those pecuniary interests on whose behalf Her Majesty's Government are acting," and from the moment of that despatch the troubles in Egypt grew. This despatch is the damning proof of my indictment against Mr. Gladstone, that he has used the resources, dishonoured the name, and imperilled the position of this country in the East, on account of and in the interests of a gang of Jewish speculators and stock-jobbers who hold Egyptian bonds.

THE BONDHOLDERS' WAR.

I am not raking up the past for the mere fun of raking up the past, nor for the mere purpose of attacking Her Majesty's Government. I am raking up the past, and will continue to rake it up till voice and breath shall fail me, because I want the people to look into this question of our business in Egypt; because I know that until the people do look into it themselves, and settle and solve it for themselves, no good will be done. These speculators and stock-jobbers who have dragged this country into war, and have saddled this overburdened Empire of ours with the occupation of Egypt, are comparatively few in number, but are very powerful. They have their creatures in the Government offices, they have their organs and writers in the London Press, they have their emissaries and spies and agents hard at work in London society. The pressure they can bring to bear is tremendous, and I am deeply convinced that until the masses of the people smash up and scatter this accursed ring, our operations in Egypt will continue to be attended with failure, disgrace, and disaster. I know this, if I know anything at all, that if once the people of this country as a whole can be induced to interest themselves in any matter, to take it up, to make it their own, to settle it one way or another, the people will not go wrong. Governments will go wrong, Parliaments will go wrong, classes will go wrong, London society and the Pall-Mall clubs always goes wrong; but the people do not go wrong. You must take up this Egyptian question and examine it for yourselves. I use the expression "you must" advisedly, because if you would for one moment grasp the tremendous responsibilities towards

Egypt, towards Europe, towards civilization, which we have already incurred, the unknown and infinite liabilities we are drifting into, the terrible and crushing dangers which may at any moment burst upon us, you would not lose a day, or even an hour, before speaking out your mind.

THE SOUDAN.

I said that the occupation of Egypt was a bondholders' occupation. The policy of Her Majesty's Government in this Soudan question is proof enough of that, if proof were wanted. Had we been in Egypt for the interests of Egypt, or of Europe, or of civilization and freedom generally, should we have abandoned the entire territory of the Soudan, with all its government, garrisons, European and Egyptian subjects, to be massacred by a cruel and fanatical barbarian? Every honest man will answer no. But it is because we are not in Egypt for the benefit of Egypt, or of Europe, or of civilization and freedom, and because an effort to hold the Soudan would have depreciated Egyptian bonds, would have led very probably to their ultimate repudiation and made the Jewish speculators and stock-jobbers howl—it is because of all this that we have abandoned the Soudan, and with it all our honour and all our prestige in the East. I know well what the people of England would say if they examined for themselves this Egyptian affair. They would say that the original expedition to Egypt was unnecessary and iniquitous; that Mr. Gladstone allowed a revolutionary movement to proceed far enough to destroy and shatter a corrupt and filthy dynasty; but that just when the revolutionary movement, which had at its back the entire Egyptian nation, was about to construct on the ruins of the former Government an administration of its own, that at that critical moment Mr. Gladstone intervened and shattered the revolutionary movement; that from that disastrous day till now he has wandered amid the devastation purposeless and bewildered, has made no effort to reconstruct Egyptian society, no effort to relieve from their burdens Egyptian people; but that haunted and distracted by the guiltiness of his intervention, he has added misery to misery, and woe to woe, till he has transformed the fair land of Egypt into a perfect hell upon earth. The people of England would say that such a state of things must

cease ; that a Government must be established which must possess the confidence of the Egyptian people ; that a dynasty which is repudiated by a nation of six millions shall not be forced upon that nation by the armies and the navies of the liberty-loving and liberty spreading Anglo-Saxon race ; that the financial resources of Egypt shall be assigned to the full and entire satisfaction of the demands of Egyptian government ; and if there is any surplus that, and that only, shall go to the Egyptian bonds, thus reversing the process which is going on now under our auspices of assigning all the financial resources of Egypt to Egyptian bonds, and leaving any niggardly surplus which may remain for Egyptian government, for the maintenance of society, law, and order in that country, and for the development of the resources of that impoverished and plundered land. They would say that, as our Government has rashly but irrevocably committed England to the resettlement of Egypt, those purposes, and those purposes alone, shall be the object of the employment of British troops ; that until those purposes are accomplished, British troops shall remain in Egypt, flinching from no obstacles, no difficulties, no dangers, and that when those purposes have been accomplished, that on that glad day, and not before, the British troops shall evacuate Egypt with genuine glory, added honours and increased renown. This is what the people of England would say ; this is how the British race would fulfil its great mission upon earth ; and it is because I know that it is only the mass of the people as a whole which will give this brave and noble answer that I implore the people to turn their eyes steadily to the East.

BOTH PARTIES EXTRAVAGANT, ALL GOVERNMENTS LAVISH.

Let us now look for a few moments at our own domestic affairs. A stupendous programme of legislation is prepared by the Ministers for a jaded and worn-out Parliament in the coming session. The extension of the franchise, county government for the three kingdoms, local taxation, the municipal administration of the metropolis, University education for Scotland, intermediate education for Wales—these are but the leading items of a long list which the Government, apparently in all seriousness, profess to expect to deal with in a thoroughly comprehensive fashion before New Year's day shall again come round. And if they fail to

deal with any of these subjects, as fail they will and must, the ready excuse will burst from their lips that the cause of their failure is the villany of the Tory party and the atrocious baseness of the House of Lords; whereas, if for a passing moment, by the exertion of some supernatural power they could be clothed in the garb of truth, they would be the first to acknowledge that their own prodigious imbecility was alone to blame for the catastrophe. I will not conceal my own opinion, that should one and all of the great questions which I have enumerated remain *in statu quo* for another five or ten years, no one of the Queen's subjects would be a penny the worse. A starving population is not to be fed by votes; a ruined commerce and agriculture are not to be resuscitated by the abolition of quarter sessions; and a tottering empire will not be maintained by the creation of a new Lord Mayor. If my advice were asked, I would recommend the people of England to leave legislation alone for a while, and to insist upon the House of Commons devoting itself to a little practical business. At any rate this course would have all the charm of novelty. I will explain what I mean. The first and most vital interest of a nation is finance. Upon finance everything connected with government hinges. Good finance insures good government and national prosperity; bad finance is the cause of inefficient government and national depression. Great and endless controversies have been carried on for some years between rival Chancellors of the Exchequer, as to whether Liberals are more extravagant than Conservatives, or *vice versâ*. Do not trouble yourselves about these quarrels—they are perfectly idle, fruitless, and beside the real question; figures and statistics are jumbled up, added to, subtracted from, multiplied, and divided by the frantic combatants until a perfectly insoluble Chinese puzzle has been created, in which every one is hopelessly lost. The truth is, and I speak with the advantages of a looker-on, who, as you know, generally sees most of the game, that both parties are extravagant, and that all Governments are lavish. The only difference between the Liberals and the Conservatives on this most vital question is that Conservative extravagance is honest and above board; Liberal extravagance is dishonest and surreptitious. Sir Stafford Northcote and Mr. Gladstone contending about financial extrava-

gance always reminds me of the two men who went up into the Temple to pray—Sir Stafford Northcote occupying the pleasing and hopeful position of the publican, Mr. Gladstone that of the purblind and sanctimonious Pharisee. The great fact which I am anxious to impress upon you is, that in twenty-five years your expenditure has increased five and twenty millions. The gross revenue now collected by the Chancellor of the Exchequer amounts to nearly ninety millions. The sum is so enormous that you will be inclined to agree that the most ordinary prudence compels rigid inquiry. It may be all right, perfectly natural, and quite satisfactory; but let us make certain of this. When you are spending such colossal sums as ninety millions a year, do not let any doubt remain in your minds for a moment as to how the money goes. You can easily do this if you like. Year by year the control of the House of Commons over the expenditure is getting more slender and more feeble. To such an extent is this deterioration going on that, last session, under the financial guidance of Mr. Gladstone, the sublime spectacle was witnessed of thirty millions of taxation being voted by the House of Commons in thirty minutes of time. For many years there has been no overhauling by Parliament of the spending departments.

MINISTERS MERELY PUPPETS.

It is a great mistake to suppose that Ministers preside over their departments. They do nothing of the kind. They merely appear for them in Parliament. The public departments are despotically presided over by permanent officials, perfectly irresponsible, caring nothing for the House of Commons, which has for years left them to themselves, and always putting back in his place, with the greatest success and rapidity, any Minister who should be such an egregious fool as to imagine he was really a Minister. Under this kind of *régime* you are spending ninety millions of money on your Government, and this kind of *régime* has grown up on account of the House of Commons of late years being entirely given over to legislation. No time is ever left for what I call business, and year after year public accounts—£ s. d.—are left to look after themselves. Now, in all seriousness, this is an ominous change. It was not so, it was not on such principles that

our great financial character and credit were built up. We are come now upon bad times; if ever national thrift was necessary it is necessary now. I should like to see the House of Commons devote one or even two entire sessions to finance, and nothing but finance. I should like to turn the House of Commons loose into our public departments on a voyage of discovery. I should like to see every one of our public departments rigorously inquired into by small committees of about seven experienced and practical members of Parliament, each. Depend upon it, we should discover some arrangements of extraordinary interest and curiosity. The inquiry should include the amount of work which any department is expected or supposed to transact, the amount of work which it actually does transact, the number of hands employed in transacting that work, the hours of labour of each clerk or *employé*, the salaries received by each, and then let all these be carefully compared, under the same headings, with the arrangements in some of our great commercial establishments. Such an inquiry could not but be most useful, and such an inquiry is compulsorily and peremptorily dictated to you when you consider the vast scale of your expenditure and the present bad times. My firm belief is, that such an inquiry would demonstrate that those useful arrangements of economy of time, economy of labour, and economy of money are absolutely unknown in our public departments.

DRASTIC REFORMS.

I believe that such an inquiry would lead to the decrease of our Foreign Office establishments at home and abroad by at least two-thirds. I do not imagine that the public has the smallest idea of the utter uselessness of a great portion of that department. I allude especially to the large staff of secretaries and *attachés* which is kept up abroad for purely ornamental purposes. The Foreign Office would have a very bad time before a Committee of the House of Commons which was firmly intent on effecting a great economy. Take the War Office again. We should find, in all probability, that nearly all the mechanical work of that department could be discharged by intelligent and meritorious non-commissioned officers at about one-half of the salaries now paid to the War Office clerks. We

should find that we spend annually from fifteen to sixteen millions on our army. Germany, Austria, and France do not spend more ; but we should find that while these Powers have great armies, we have no army at all. We have regiments of various sorts ; but if by an army you mean a perfect fighting machine fully equipped in all its parts, composed of seasoned soldiers, and ready to take the field at the shortest notice, then we have not got an army or anything approaching it ; and yet we spend over fifteen millions on it annually. You would have to consider whether it is worth while going on spending such an enormous sum of money for a thing which you do not possess. Look at the navy. We spend ten or eleven millions annually upon our navy. The highest naval authorities will tell you that our navy against a coalition of France and Russia, or France and Italy, would be absolutely impotent to protect our coasts, our commerce, and our colonies. Some day when we have a great war—and with Egypt on our hands such a war may come at any moment—we shall discover all these trifles ; but do not you think that there would be no harm in spending a little time now, while you are at peace, in looking into all this, in making certain about it, and of not placing such implicit confidence in the optimist statements of either one minister or another ? Do not you think that the time would be as well spent, and even better spent, by the House of Commons than in wrangling over the order and course of legislation, whether reform or redistribution should come first, whether they should be dealt with together or singly, whether Ireland should be included or excluded, whether the 40s. freeholder shall be abolished or preserved ? All these questions are infinitely little and unimportant when compared with the real practical business matters which I have suggested, and if to the line of business which I am most anxious to see adopted you add the prospect and the chance—and the very good chance—of saving about ten millions of money at present absolutely wasted, I think you will agree that the suggestions I have made are neither foolish, unattractive, nor unworthy of your serious attention. The Radicals are always denouncing financial extravagance. They profess on this point great independence of party, but just test the sincerity of their denunciations by some such proposals as I have made to you, that all legislation should

be put off for a year, and that we should apply the whole of our abilities and time to saving public money. You would have such a howl of fury from them as never was heard. Rather than lose their chance of subverting the monarchy and establishing a republic in this country, they would allow you to spend 200 millions a year. I believe myself that the English people would rather have an economical and thrifty Government than a Republican Government, and yet of this I am certain, that you will never have an economical and thrifty Government until you positively direct and order the House of Commons to adopt some such course as I have proposed.

A COMMISSION ON TRADE.

There is another inquiry which might be carried on simultaneously with those which I have mentioned, of the most vital importance to the working classes of this country, and that is an inquiry into the present condition of British industry, and as to how that industry is affected by our present methods of raising revenue for the service of the State. I think that such an inquiry is needed even if it was only to compose the public mind. What is the state of things in the world of British industry? We are suffering from a depression of trade extending as far back as 1874, ten years of trade depression, and the most hopeful either among our capitalists or our artisans can discover no signs of a revival. Your iron industry is dead, dead as mutton; your coal industries, which depend greatly on the iron industries, are languishing. Your silk industry is dead, assassinated by the foreigner. Your woollen industry is *in articulo mortis*, gasping, struggling. Your cotton industry is seriously sick. The shipbuilding industry, which held out longest of all, is come to a standstill. Turn your eyes where you will, survey any branch of British industry you like, you will find signs of mortal disease. The self-satisfied Radical philosophers will tell you it is nothing; they point to the great volume of British trade. Yes, the volume of British trade is still large, but it is a volume which is no longer profitable; it is working and struggling. So do the muscles and nerves of the body of a man who has been hanged twitch and work violently for a short time after the operation. But death is

there all the same, life has utterly departed, and suddenly comes the *rigor mortis*. Well, but with this state of British industry what do you find going on? You find foreign iron, foreign wool, foreign silk and cotton pouring into the country, flooding you, drowning you, sinking you, swamping you; your labour market is congested, wages have sunk below the level of life, the misery in our large towns is too frightful to contemplate, and emigration or starvation is the remedy which the Radicals offer you with the most undisturbed complacency. But what produced this state of things? Free imports? I am not sure; I should like an inquiry; but I suspect free imports of the murder of our industries much in the same way as if I found a man standing over a corpse and plunging his knife into it I should suspect that man of homicide, and I should recommend a coroner's inquest and a trial by jury. Of this you may be certain—that an impartial inquiry into this great question will put more money into your pockets and more hope into your hearts than any Reform Bill. Do you know what free trade means in the mouth of the latter-day Radicals? It means that articles of food, necessities of life coming from abroad, which can be produced at home, shall be taxed heavily, and that articles of manufacture, luxuries coming from abroad, and which can be produced at home, shall be admitted duty free. Do you know that your cocoa is taxed at 13 per cent., your coffee at 18 per cent., your dried fruits, currants, &c., 26 per cent., your tea 47 per cent., the poor man's tobacco 504 per cent., your rum 504 per cent., your brandy 114 per cent.? Observe this curiosity—that rum, which comes from a British colony, is taxed five times as heavily as brandy, which comes from France; and with all this, silk, leather, wool, and iron are all coming into the country duty free, and hopelessly underselling your own products and driving your industrial population to America, to the colonies, to the workhouse, or to the prison. Do you understand the reason of all this? I frankly confess I do not. Do you think the House of Commons would be wasting its time if it looked into all these matters carefully? Suppose a merchant were to find his expenditure greatly increased, his revenue greatly diminished, and his resources greatly failing, and under these circumstances were to occupy the whole of his time with

the differential calculus, or with inquiries into interplanetary space. You would think him very foolish, not to say mad, and you would anticipate his speedy ruin. Well, the English people will be exactly like that merchant, if at such a moment as the present, they occupy the whole of their time with great and wild schemes of legislation, and leave the real, hard, practical business of life to take care of itself. Yet that is the course recommended to you by the Radical party.

RADICAL RUIN OF THE LAND.

Now, if there is one thing more than another of which the Radical party is proud it is their land legislation and their policy with respect to land tenure. Yet I think I can show you that this boasted legislation and policy have grievously affected the labour market in the towns. What is the great cry of the moment? Is it not the congested state of our great towns and the overcrowding of our urban population? And what has produced that congestion and overcrowding? Principally the migration into our towns of an immense population which used to subsist on agriculture. That migration has not only overcrowded your towns, but has increased the competition in the labour market up to starvation level, and has lowered the wages of the artisan classes. Well, in my judgment, the land legislation and avowed land policy of the Radical party are the chief causes of that migration. The Radical party have destroyed nearly all the privileges, all the pleasures, all the amenities which used to attach to the tenure of land, by their recent legislation, and announce that as speedily as possible they intend to destroy those which may remain, and they threaten the very title itself of individual landed possessions. What is the effect of all this? In former times, and not so very long ago, the moment that a man had made a fortune in trade he invested that money in a landed estate; the possession of a landed estate gave him social status, political influence, and sporting rights, and possessed many other amenities and attractions. The investment of capital by a capitalist in landed estates meant the employment of capital in the development of that estate, in drainage, in extensive building operations, in road making, and every other kind of improvement; in a word, it meant active employment for the agricultural labourer. Investment in land was never a highly remunera-

tive investment, but there was a bloom on it which other investments did not possess, and it was regarded as perfectly safe. But now all that is gone; the investment is no longer safe, and the bloom has been altogether rubbed off the peach. There is no political influence, no sporting rights, and few amenities. Formerly you had a constant and regular migration of capitalists from our large centres of industrial activity into the country, and a healthy circulation of capital among the country population. But now, in consequence of the Radical land policy, that migration has almost entirely ceased. Auctioneers will tell you that it is no use now trying to sell large landed estates. The capitalist is not such a fool as to invest his hard-earned fortune in a security which has been deprived of all its great attractions; he invests his money now in colonial securities, or in landed property abroad. Instead of a migration of wealthy and enterprising capitalists from the town into the country, you have a migration of ruined and starving agricultural labourers into your towns, lowering your wages and increasing your rates; and this disastrous process may be directly traced to the doctrines on the tenure of land which have been put in practice or are about to be put in practice by the Radical party. Never did the land require capital so much as it does now, never was land so easily and cheaply in the grasp of the capitalist as it is now, if he chose to put out his hand, and yet there is not a capitalist in his senses who would touch it with a barge pole. I commend this subject to your most careful consideration. These Radical nostrums are like certain drugs which seem to be pleasant to take at the moment, and which seem to produce a good result at the moment, but which in a very short time are found to be destructive to health and fatal to life. I am certain of this, that the more the English people examine into the Radical policy, the more the Radical party develops itself and comes closer to the eye, the more clearly you will perceive what transparent humbug the Radical policy is, and what transcendent impostors the Radical party is composed of.

THE EARL OF DURHAM.

A study of one single incident in Mr. Chamberlain's interesting career will lead you to this conclusion. Mr.

Chamberlain a short time ago attempted to hold Lord Salisbury up to the execration of the people as one who enjoyed great riches for which he had neither toiled nor spun, and he savagely denounced Lord Salisbury and all his class. As a matter of fact, Lord Salisbury from his earliest days has toiled and spun in the service of the State and for the advancement of his countrymen in learning, in wealth, and in prosperity ; but no Radical ever yet allowed himself to be embarrassed by a question of fact. Just look, however, at what Mr. Chamberlain himself does. He goes to Newcastle and is entertained at a banquet there, and procures for the president of the feast a live earl, no less a person than the Earl of Durham. Now Lord Durham is a young gentleman who has just come of age, who is in the possession of immense hereditary estates, who is well known on Newmarket heath, and prominent among the gilded youth who throng the corridors of the Gaiety Theatre, but who has studied politics about as much as Barnum's new white elephant, and upon whose ingenuous mind even the idea of rendering service to the State has not yet commenced to dawn. If by any means it could be legitimate, and I hold that it is illegitimate, to stigmatize any individual as enjoying great riches for which he has neither toiled nor spun, such a case would be the case of the Earl of Durham ; and yet it is under the patronage of the Earl of Durham, and basking in the smiles of the Earl of Durham, bandying vulgar compliments with the Earl of Durham, that this stern patriot, this rigid moralist, this unbending censor, the Right Hon. Joseph Chamberlain, flaunts his Radical and levelling doctrines before the astounded democrats of Newcastle.

“THE AGE OF HOLLOWAY'S PILLS, OF COLMAN'S MUSTARD,
AND HORNIMAN'S PURE TEA.”

“Vanity of vanities,” says the preacher, “all is vanity.” “Humbug of humbugs,” says the Radical, “all is humbug.” Gentlemen, we live in an age of advertisement, the age of Holloway's pills, of Colman's mustard, and of Horniman's pure tea ; and the policy of lavish advertisement has been so successful in commerce that the Liberal party, with its usual enterprise, has adapted it to politics. The Prime Minister is the greatest living master of the art of personal political advertisement. Holloway, Colman, and

Horniman are nothing compared with him. Every act of his, whether it be for the purposes of health, or of recreation, or of religious devotion, is spread before the eyes of every man, woman, and child in the United Kingdom on large and glaring placards. For the purposes of an autumn holiday a large transatlantic steamer is specially engaged, the Poet Laureate adorns the suite, and receives a peerage as his salary, and the incidents of the voyage are luncheon with the Emperor of Russia and tea with the Queen of Denmark. For the purposes of recreation he has selected the felling of trees, and we may usefully remark that his amusements, like his politics, are essentially destructive. Every afternoon the whole world is invited to assist at the crashing fall of some beech or elm or oak. The forest laments in order that Mr. Gladstone may perspire, and full accounts of these proceedings are forwarded by special correspondents to every daily paper every recurring morning. For the purposes of religious devotion the advertisements grow larger. The parish church at Hawarden is insufficient to contain the thronging multitudes of flycatchers who flock to hear Mr. Gladstone read the lessons for the day, and the humble parishioners are banished to hospitable Nonconformist tabernacles in order that mankind may be present at the Prime Minister's rendering of Isaiah, or Jeremiah, or the Book of Job. This, gentlemen, all this, is the great art of advertisement, and there can be no doubt that it pays when undertaken on the grandiose scale adopted by Mr. Gladstone. I am not sure whether in our calmer and more reflective moments we should not prefer a little more real simplicity in our public men, whether their private lives should not be more genuinely private, and whether their special family interests and family events would not be more natural if they were confined to the family circle. People used to say that Lord Beaconsfield was theatrical; but Lord Beaconsfield was a perfect child in this matter; he had not even mastered the rudiments of the art, and he never dreamt of such grand and theatrical representations as those with which Mr. Gladstone and his starring company astonish the British public week by week.

A SCENE OF DESOLATION.

However, these remarks of mine are merely preliminary to

a couple of concluding political observations to which I was led by two of the Gladstonian advertisements which appeared in the papers the other day. The first described the journey of a deputation of working-men from the pure and immaculate borough of Chester to Hawarden Castle. It has always appeared to me somewhat incongruous and inappropriate that the great chief of the Radical party should reside in a castle. But to proceed. One would have thought that the deputation would have been received in the house, in the study, in the drawing-room, or even in the dining-room. Not at all. That would have been out of harmony with the advertisement "boom." Another scene had been arranged. The working-men were guided through the ornamental grounds, into the wide-spreading park, strewn with the wreckage and the ruins of the Prime Minister's sport. All around them lay the rotting trunks of once umbrageous trees; all around them, tossed by the winds, were boughs and bark and withered shoots. They come suddenly on the Prime Minister and Master Herbert, in scanty attire and profuse perspiration, engaged in the destruction of a gigantic oak, just giving its last dying groan. They are permitted to gaze and to worship and adore, and, having conducted themselves with exemplary propriety, are each of them presented with a few chips as a memorial of that memorable scene.

CHIPS.

Is not this, I thought to myself as I read the narrative, a perfect type and emblem of Mr. Gladstone's government of the Empire? The working classes of this country in 1880 sought Mr. Gladstone. He told them that he would give them and all other subjects of the Queen much legislation, great prosperity, and universal peace, and he has given them nothing but chips. Chips to the faithful allies in Afghanistan, chips to the trusting native races of South Africa, chips to the Egyptian fellah, chips to the British farmer, chips to the manufacturer and the artisan, chips to the agricultural labourer, chips to the House of Commons itself. I ask you who have followed with care the events of this Parliament, to carry your minds back to the beginning of 1880, to the demonstration of Dulcigno, to the slaughter of Maiwand, to the loss of Candahar, to the

rebellion in the Transvaal, to the Irish Land League with all its attendant horrors, to the scenes in the House of Commons, to the loss of freedom and dignity sustained by that assembly, to the abortive sessions, to the Egyptian muddle, with its sham military glories, to the resignation of Cabinet Ministers, to the spectacle recently afforded of two Ministerial colleagues openly defying each other, to the illusory programme spread before you for the coming year, to the immense dangers and difficulties which surround you on every side—turn over all these matters in your minds, search your memories, look at them as you will; I ask you again, is there in any quarter of the globe, where the influence of Mr. Gladstone's Government has been felt, is there one single item, act, expression, or development on which you can dwell with any pride or even satisfaction? Is there one single solid, real, substantial construction or improvement which can benefit permanently or even momentarily, either directly or indirectly, your own countrymen at home, your own countrymen abroad, or any worthy portion of the human race. Chips you will find, nothing but chips—hard, dry, un-nourishing, indigestible chips. To all those who leaned upon Mr. Gladstone, who trusted in him, and who hoped for something from him, chips, nothing but chips; to those who defied him, trampled upon his power, who insulted and reviled his representatives and his policy, to the barbarous Boer and the rebel Irish, to them, and to them alone, booty and great gain.

"GUARDED AS USUAL!"

The other startling advertisement I wish to allude to was as follows:—"Hawarden Castle.—The Prime Minister attended Divine service this morning. He was guarded as usual." "Guarded as usual!" "As usual!" Gracious Heavens! What a commentary on Liberal government in those two words, "as usual!" Do you know that from the days when first what is called a Prime Minister was invented to the present, there has been no Prime Minister about whom such a statement could be made? Many Prime Ministers have come and gone, good, bad, and indifferent; but the best and the worst have never been guarded by aught else save the English people. And, has it come to this? Are the times so terrible. are bad

passions so rife and unrestrained, after four years of Liberal rule, that the apostle of freedom, the benefactor of his country, the man for whom no flattery is too fulsome, no homage too servile, cannot attend Divine service in his parish church without being "guarded as usual?" Surely a world of serious reflection is opened up; surely the art of government must have sunk to a very low ebb, when the first servant of the Crown has to be watched night and day by alguazils armed to the teeth. I hope and pray that they will guard him well, for it would be an indelible stain on our name and our fame if a man who has spent fifty years of his life in the service of the State were to be the victim of an infamous assassin. But I ask myself, are we to blame humanity for this state of things? Is our civilization all in vain? Is Christianity but a phantom and a fiction? Is human nature the awful and incurable cause? Surely not. It is more natural to blame the policy of the statesmen who, to possess themselves of power, to overthrow a hated rival, set class against class and race against race; who use their eloquence for no nobler purpose than to lash into frenzy the needy and the discontented; who for party purposes are ready to deride morality and paralyze law; who, to gain a few votes either in Parliament or in a borough, ally themselves equally with the atheist or with the rebel, and who lightly arouse and lightly spring from one delirium of the multitude to another in order to maintain themselves at a giddy and a perilous height. This is the true explanation, the deep-seated reason of the words "guarded as usual." Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues, to destroy Lord Beaconsfield, did not scruple to appeal to the most desperate instincts of the human race, and now, to control and crush down this legion of foul fiends, the resources of civilization are almost exhausted.

MOTTO OF THE TORY PARTY: "OF THE PEOPLE, FOR THE PEOPLE, BY THE PEOPLE."

The Tory party calls upon the country with a sonorous and warning cry to turn away from guides so dangerous, to repudiate betimes a policy so vile, and, by giving over the government to other men, and, above all, to other principles, to restore to the Empire that great calm which in 1880 you were falsely promised, which in 1884

you so dearly need. The Tory party sets out no long programme, it commits itself to no irredeemable pledges ; it does not ask you to embark on any wild and unknown enterprises ; it promises you one thing, and one thing only—one thing which is worth everything else, which will bring with it inevitably prosperity and peace—it promises you government, government which for four years you have not had, government for which you vainly pay heavy taxes, government which alone you lack, government which the Tories alone can give—for they are united, homogeneous, patriotic, and true. Can you look for government, can you expect anything but anarchy from an Administration which contains Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain, from a party which comprises Mr. Samuel Morley and Mr. Bradlaugh, from a heterogeneous agglomeration of Whigs and Radicals, in which "pull devil, pull baker," is the order of the day. Surely these last four years—four years of base compromise and sickening indecision—must have proved to the most infatuated that the Liberal party of the present day has not one single common principle of policy, either in home or foreign affairs, on which for purposes of efficient government it can unite even for a day. For the Whigs are a class with all the selfish prejudices and all the vices of a class ; the Radicals are a sect with all the grinding tyranny and all the debasing fanaticism of a sect. The Whig class and the Radical sect have succeeded, by an amount of political cunning rarely equalled in the history of States, in acquiring a power which their monstrous union is impotent to wield ; but their unnatural connection cannot last. It has arisen from the marvellous talents, stupefying eloquence, and illimitable ambition of one man, and with him it will pass away. The well-known proverb, "*Vox populi, vox Dei*," is to the Whigs as sounding brass and tinkling cymbals, for they have always existed by corrupting and deceiving the people. To the Radicals it is a fetish of the lowest order, for they exist by driving and tyrannizing over the people. But to the Tories "*Vox populi, vox Dei*" is an ever-springing faith, a vivifying principle, an undying truth, without which their politics would be as naught, without a future and without a hope. The Whigs tell you that the institutions of this kingdom, as illustrated by the balance

of Queen, Lords and Commons, and the Established Church, are but conveniences and useful commodities, which may be safely altered, modified, or even abolished, so long as the alteration, modification, or abolition is left to the Whigs to carry out. The Radicals tell you that these institutions are hideous, poisonous and degrading, and that the divine caucus is the only machine which can turn out, as if it was a patent medicine, the happiness of humanity. But the Tories, who are of the people, know and exclaim that these institutions, which are not so much the work of the genius of man but rather the inspired offspring of time, are the tried guarantees of individual liberty, popular freedom, and Christian morality, that they are the only institutions which possess the virtue of stability, of stability even through all ages, that the harmonious fusion of classes and interests which they represent corresponds with and satisfies the highest aspirations either of peoples or of men, that by them alone has our Empire been founded and extended in the past, and that by them alone can it prosper or be maintained in the future. Such is the Tory party, and such are its principles, by which it can give to England the government she requires—democratic, aristocratic, parliamentary, monarchical, uniting in an indissoluble embrace religious liberty and moral order. And this party—this Tory party of to-day—exists by the favour of no caucus, nor for the selfish interests of any class. Its motto is—of the people, for the people, by the people; unity and freedom are the beacons which shed their light around its future path, and amid all political conflict this shall be its only aim—to increase and to secure within imperishable walls the historic happiness of English homes.

CALLED TO BIRMINGHAM.

(AT WOODSTOCK, JANUARY 29, 1884.)

I have, as you are no doubt aware, addressed recently in various parts of the country large audiences of the British public on what appeared to me the most interesting questions of the day; and, so far as I have been able, I have

exhausted those questions. The misfortune of my position to-night is this, that now, when just before the assembling of Parliament I have the honour of meeting my constituents, I find myself, like Sir Stafford Northcote at Exeter, with "nothing" to talk about; only, unlike him, I have nothing to say. There is, however, gentlemen, one subject on which I must talk to you, only it is a matter of local and personal rather than of public and general interest. I allude to the Parliamentary representation of the borough of Woodstock and to my own connection with that representation. I have been, gentlemen, for ten years member of Parliament for the borough of Woodstock, and during that time I have received from you a more abundant share of confidence and kindness than falls generally to most members of Parliament. I had hoped that I might have continued to represent you so long as Parliamentary existence might be mine, for I was aware that, however fiercely the storms of political life might rage, I had always here a friendly haven to which I could run, and where I could repair damages from the stores of your approval, your encouragement, your confidence, and your support. The other day, however, gentlemen, I received an intimation from a gentleman who possesses the confidence of the Conservative party in Birmingham that it was the wish of that party there I should contest that town at the next general election, in conjunction with Colonel Burnaby. I gave to that intimation, as I was bound to do, my most serious consideration, and I decided that if it should turn out in reality to be the wish of the entire party in that great town that I should be one of those who should be invited to fight their battle, it was my duty to place my services at their disposal. I am sensible of the great advantages which belong to the representation of a moderately-sized constituency; I am equally sensible of the high honour and heavy responsibility which attach to the position of one who might be fortunate enough to gain the confidence of the electors of a vast and wealthy city; but what weighed with me most in coming to a decision was this, that I felt that I should fall greatly in your estimation, which above all else I value, if I were to run away from the chance and the risks of a Birmingham contest, and prefer to shelter myself behind the fortifications of your indulgence and fidelity. I am sure

you would be of opinion that in the coming struggle on which the entire English Constitution is about to enter, that where the battle is the hottest, where the contest might be the greatest, and the hope the slightest, there was the place where any one loyal in the Conservative cause should like to be. Therefore, gentlemen, if I should receive from our party in Birmingham a formal summons, to Birmingham I shall go. And I am sure that in the contest which will arise, I shall carry with me your good wishes and warm sympathies, and whether the result be success or defeat, I shall still enjoy a large measure of your friendship. I know further, gentlemen, that my successor in the representation of this borough, be he who he may, while he will undoubtedly serve you more efficiently than I have been able to do, he will, I hope, like his predecessors for many years back in that position, be loyal to his Sovereign and his country, be devoted to the Empire and to the Constitution, and that this ancient borough, connected from earliest days with the monarchy of England, will never be dishonoured by the representative of the Radical school.

I may tell you that the days of Woodstock as a Parliamentary borough are said to be drawing to a close, and that Woodstock will be before long numbered amongst those numerous institutions which the axe of Mr. Gladstone will lay low. All I have to say to you is—do not be alarmed : threatened boroughs, like threatened men, live long. Parliamentary reform is no child's play, and has before now wrecked Governments as powerful and more powerful than the present. Moreover, there is behind Mr. Gladstone another tribunal, compared with whose power Mr. Gladstone himself is but as a pigmy—the tribunal of the English people. On the sense, on the courage, on the justice, and on the patriotism of that tribunal we may confidently rely. For a just settlement of Parliamentary reform—whether there is to be any settlement at all just now or not, or what form that settlement should take—I do not look to the House of Lords, nor to the Whigs, nor less than all to the Radical party for the settlement of this question. I reiterate that I look to the English people, for I am sure the people will not be at the beck and nod of Mr. Gladstone and the Caucus for the purpose of rejuvenating a senile Administration, or to restore the credit of a

dissipated and dying Government. I say they will not break violently with the traditions of the past; they will not destroy those liberties of franchise which their forefathers have erected, nor will they endanger the union of the three kingdoms, on which hang the future fortunes of the Empire. All such efforts will not allure them, more needed reforms will encourage them, other guides will guide them, and Woodstock, however much its Parliamentary existence is seriously threatened, along with other institutions, will continue, I am certain, to retain for a long time to come its privileges and its rights, while faithfully performing its duties under the British Constitution.

"THIS IDENTICAL QUAKER."

(AT WOODSTOCK, JANUARY 31, 1884.)

While we were spending a very quiet and thoughtful evening the other night at Woodstock, the Radicals were making a very noisy display at Birmingham. But the mode of warfare of the Radical party resembles that adopted by savage tribes, who endeavour to terrify their opponents by horrid yells and resounding exclamations. I observe that the reports of the speeches of Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain on Tuesday were interspersed with "loud and prolonged groans," "groans," "hisses," "renewed hisses," and "roars of laughter," and such like. These resources will no doubt frighten any person of weak nerves, and are calculated to make old women and children run away. But the Tory party in Birmingham, many thousands strong, will preserve its composure, and the candidate whom they have put forward will not be intimidated one little bit. I have said over and over again that the policy and the principles of the Radical party are all humbug. Mr. Bright declared that such language was shocking and disgusting. Well, I will shock him still more—by doing what I have done before, and proving what I have said. I have never noticed Mr. Bright in any other speeches which I have made.

I have always considered him to be out of the hunt. But as Mr. Bright had thought proper to return to the field with all his old ferocity, I will notice Mr. Bright in the course of a few remarks I have to make.

TWO PLUNDERING CUCKOOS.

Mr. Bright advised his audience at Birmingham to read over again the speeches of Mr. Charles Villiers on free trade made fifty years ago. I advise them to do nothing of the kind, because if they do they will lose every shred of veneration and respect which they still may feel for the name of Mr. Bright. They will find that the great battle of free trade, of which Mr. Bright has never been tired of boasting loud and long, was fought by Mr. Charles Villiers long before Mr. Bright made his appearance in public; that Mr. Charles Villiers bore the burden and heat of that protracted and lengthened contest; and when Mr. Villiers had won the day Mr. Bright and his dear friend Mr. Cobden stepped in and tried to rob him of all his glory. All those who read Mr. Charles Villiers' speeches will find that Mr. Bright and his dear friend Mr. Cobden were nothing more nor less than two plundering cuckoos, who shamefully ejected Mr. Charles Villiers from the nest which he had constructed, and who reared therein their own chattering and silly brood. I advise those who so lustily cheered Mr. Bright on Tuesday, and so terrifically groaned at his opponents, by no manner of means to read over the speeches of Mr. Charles Villiers, if they wish to see the repeal of the corn laws maintained; for they would find that every prophecy which was ventured upon, every blessing which was promised, every hope which was raised by that distinguished man in support of his case, and which was repeated second-hand by Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden, had been falsified, denied, and disappointed. Mr. Bright no doubt endeavoured to make capital against the Tory party by professing to repeat a private conversation which took place between himself and Lord George Bentinck about half a century ago. Whenever I hear a gentleman endeavouring to make a good story out of a conversation of so very ancient a date, particularly when one of the parties is dead, I always conclude that the gentleman is either

blessed with an all-powerful imagination, or that his nightly slumber is agitated with marvellous dreams. The Tory party may pass by with the utmost unconcern these legendary reminiscences, nor will the historian of England in search of materials have recourse either to the imagination or the dreams of Mr. Bright.

"LOLLED AT HIS EASE IN HIS SINECURE OFFICE."

I will, however, now show you that the policy and principles of the Radical party are what I called them—"humbug." I regret very much to use such a word, but, after all, it is a good old English word, and it is the only word which adequately expresses the Radical party. Mr. Bright charges it against the Tories as a high crime and misdemeanour that they are endeavouring to overthrow the best Government which this century has seen. I want to know why it is a crime in the Tory party to attempt to-day that which Mr. Bright nearly succeeded in doing himself. If the present Government is the best Government which the century has ever seen, why did Mr. Bright think fit to leave it? Was the best Government of the century not good enough for Mr. Bright? Surely his organs would not go so far as that; but why did he resign office and put the best Government of the century in the greatest amount of peril? Was it in consequence of his great dislike to war and bloodshed? Not a bit of it. He enjoyed for two years the emoluments of a sinecure office. During those two years two bloody wars were waged—the war in Afghanistan and the war in the Transvaal. Very bloody and disgraceful wars they were. But Mr. Bright continued to draw his salary, and he lolled at his ease in his sinecure office. He swallowed these bloody wars with the calculating meekness of the sect to which he belonged. Well, I would ask, Why did he resign? He resigned office because of the bombardment of Alexandria. He said it was an outrage against the moral law, and I suppose by the moral law he means the law of God. All he charged against the Government was that they had violated the laws of God—this best of all Governments. The Tories had never presumed to make such a charge as that. Even I myself, whom my enemies have declared to be somewhat free in accusation, even I never ventured to make such a charge as that. They did

not venture to consider themselves the depositaries of Divine justice; but suppose for an instant the Tory party had done what I think they ought to have done—censured the bombardment of Alexandria in the House of Commons—Mr. Bright must have supported that censure, the Radicals must have supported Mr. Bright, the Irish party would have supported that censure, and the best of all Governments in this century would have been ignominiously kicked out of office. Mr. Bright would have been the author of the catastrophe. This identical Quaker who retains, without doubt, a well-grounded impression that the Radicals of Birmingham have neither memories nor minds, declares that the Government which he has deserted and imperilled is the best Government which this century has seen. Is not that a pretty sample of political humbug, and are the Tory party to sit silently and patiently, and hear themselves literally compared with criminals with previous convictions, by a man who from the day of Mr. Charles Villiers to the present day has pursued an unbroken career of obtaining political support under false pretences? I say emphatically, “No.” No age and no past should shelter a politician such as that from a minute and microscopic scrutiny of his public actions. The battle which Mr. Bright has rashly challenged shall be fought *sans trêve ni merci*. The savage animosity which Mr. Bright has breathed into his speeches has raised a corresponding spirit amongst his opponents. The robe of righteousness with which he and his confederates have clothed their squalid and corrupted forms shall be torn asunder; naked and ashamed shall they be beheld by all the intelligent public, and all shall be disclosed which can be, whether it be the impostor, or the so-called people’s tribune, or the grinding monopolies of Mr. Chamberlain, or the dark and evil deeds of Mr. Schnadhorst.

THE DARK AND EVIL DEEDS OF MR. SCHNADHORST.

With reference to the latter individual, I am reminded of the *Daily News*, which paper always makes me laugh more than any newspaper which I know of, with the exception of *Punch*—it is so killingly indiscreet. I came across a passage yesterday in the *Daily News* which sent me into uncontrollable convulsions of laughter. In a tremendous puff of the Birmingham Liberal Association,

which the Conservatives called the Birmingham Caucus, and of the foreign-named person, Schnadhorst, the *Daily News* thus wrote: "No record of the work of the Birmingham Liberal Association is kept; no early record of its proceedings can be found." Dear me! What a misfortune! Poor *Daily News*! Not even its special correspondent will ever get a peep at its archives. It is devoutly to be wished, for the credit of English political life, that an impenetrable mystery would always surround the exploits of Messrs. Schnadhorst and Co., at the head of their caucus at Oxford, Wallingford and Evesham. The only persons who have an active interest in hunting up these records—if they have existence—should be the Law Officers of the Crown and the sergeants of police; for the Birmingham Caucus in 1880, whatever it might be now, was nothing more nor less than an immense machine for political corruption. I heard that in Oxford the Liberal party are forming a caucus; let them imitate the system of the experienced Mr. Schnadhorst, and keep no record of their proceedings. I have altogether dwelt on the Radicals of Birmingham because of the great sparring of the Birmingham pets, which came off last Tuesday, and because I feel sure from this day, you will take a lively interest in Birmingham politics. I promise to let you know everything which comes under my observation. I would remind you that the session which is about to open ought to end in a general election, and I pray you to be united, for when the Tory signal is given, I believe the battle will be ours.

EGYPT.

(AT PICCADILLY, FEBRUARY 16, 1884.)

We are gathered together this afternoon for a serious purpose; no other, indeed, than to pronounce, after due deliberation, the strongest and most resolute condemnation of Mr. Gladstone's Egyptian policy, and our detestation and abhorrence of the bloodshed and misery of which he has been the immediate and direct cause. I say Mr. Glad-

stone's Egyptian policy because I utterly decline to recognize as responsible agents either his Ministerial colleagues or his Parliamentary supporters. Those parties have so wallowed in a stifling morass of the most degraded and servile worship of the Prime Minister that they have sunk below the level of slaves ; they have become mere puppets, the objects of derision and contempt ; they have lost all claim to the title of Englishmen, and I think they have lost all claim to the title of rational human beings. To give you an instance of the abject imbecility which has struck down the Liberal party I would mention what occurred in the House of Commons on Thursday night. Mr. Forster in that great speech which he made that evening—a speech in which he promised one vote to the Government in the House of Commons, and alienated a hundred thousand votes from the Government in the country—Mr. Forster, I say, expressed the opinion that the Government ought to have rescued the garrison of Sinkat ? “How?” cried out some unfortunate Liberals. “How?” was the plaintive cry they raised. “How?” shouted Mr. Forster, turning upon them, so that they wished themselves a hundred leagues under the sea, “How? Why, by doing a fortnight earlier what they are doing now, sending British soldiers to the rescue.” This is a good instance of the hopeless and incurable mental alienation to which the once free and independent Liberal party have been reduced by Mr. Gladstone. It was, indeed, a melancholy spectacle.

AN EVIL AND MOONSTRUCK MINISTER.

I said that our purpose this afternoon was a serious one, and it is so. It is a serious thing for Englishmen to meet together in open day for the purpose of doing all they can to destroy a Government. But we are not alone. Thousands of your countrymen have already met, and thousands more will meet, animated by the same feelings as yourselves, and like yourselves, resolved to exhaust their energies in a supreme effort to avert further disgrace from our name, future defeat from our army, and ultimate ruin from our country, by dashing from his pride of place the evil and moonstruck Minister who has brought England into grievous peril. Perilous, I say, is our condition, for it is perilous for a country to shed human blood in vain ; it is perilous for a country to assume

responsibilities which it is too cowardly to discharge ; it is perilous for a country to permit its foreign interests to be in such a condition that any morning we may awake to hear Europe demanding reparation, and even vengeance. Once again, for the fourth time in four years, do the Ministry whose programme was peace, and whose component parts were Quakers, call upon you to give them authority to wage a bloody war. Of their former wars the results have been either infamous or futile—infamy in the South of Africa, futility in the North of Africa. Will you, I ask, with these memories still fresh in your minds, permit these false guides again to direct your course? There can be but one answer. If war is again to be waged ; if British blood and British treasure are again to be poured forth ; if the regeneration of Egypt and the East is once more to be taken in hand, then other heads must do the work, and other policies must be pursued. A Parliament which has long ceased to represent England must be dissolved, and a Ministry, for a parallel to which you must go back to the days of Shaftesbury or Lord North, must be placed on its trial by the people. We have to provide for the safety of the hero Gordon, for the safety of the 4,000 British soldiers sent to Suakin, for the safety of the garrisons of the Soudan, 30,000 souls in all, whose one and only hope is now reposed in you. Above all, we have to provide for the safety of our position in the Delta of the Nile. Shall labours such as these, interests so tremendous and so vital, be committed to the hands of Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues, men who have on their souls the blood of the massacre of Maiwand, the blood of the massacre of Lang's Nek, the blood of Sir George Colley, the blood of Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke, and many other true and loyal subjects of the Crown in Ireland, the blood of Hicks Pasha and his 10,000 soldiers, the blood of the army of General Baker, the blood of Tewfik Bey and his 500 heroes? For four years this Ministry has literally waded in blood ; their hands are literally dripping and reeking with blood. From massacre to massacre they march, and their course is ineffaceably stamped upon the history of the world by an overflowing stream of blood. How many more of England's heroes—how many more of England's best and bravest, are to be sacrificed to the Moloch of Midlothian? This, too, is

shocking and horrible—the heartless indifference and callousness of the Liberal party to narratives of slaughter and unutterable woe. Fifteen times did Mr. Gladstone on Tuesday night in his reply to the grave and measured accusations of Sir Stafford Northcote—fifteen times, I say, did he excite the laughter of his Liberal supporters with a frivolity which was too hideous to contemplate. Talk of Bulgarian atrocities! Add them altogether, and even multiply them if you will, and you will not exceed the total of the atrocities and the infamies which have distinguished with an awful reputation the most blood-stained and withal the most cowardly Government which England has ever seen.

A PROTECTORATE FOR EGYPT.

Well, we are met together this afternoon as loyal subjects of the Queen, and as lovers of our country for this purpose, and this purpose only—to put a stop to further wicked and wanton bloodshed. We know that great empires must sometimes fight great battles, and that empires which fear to fight battles will soon cease to be empires; but we are resolved that the battles which we have to fight shall be fought for definite objects and for noble ends, and that poltroons and traitors in the garb of Ministers of the Crown shall sacrifice no longer for worthless and degraded aims the lifeblood of our country. The supporters of the present Government exclaim that the Tory party, although prodigal of censure, is deficient in a policy of its own; and with many taunts they call upon us to disclose the direction in which our efforts would be turned in the event of a change in the councils of the Crown. The demand cannot be considered unfair, and the reply is not so difficult as some people seem to think. We recognize to the very uttermost the immense responsibilities which this country has incurred towards Egypt and towards the interests of Europe there, and to the discharge of those responsibilities we would be prepared to apply all the resources, if need be, of the Empire of the Queen; and till those responsibilities are satisfied we would neither stop nor stay. The history of the Tory party in the past is, I fearlessly assert, an ample guarantee that the recognition of a responsibility and the full discharge of a responsibility are inseparable and consequential. I cannot claim to have the smallest share in the councils of the

leaders of the Tory party, whoever they may be—and therefore, as far as they are concerned, I speak without authority. But having studied with some care the history of our party in the past, possessing an unbounded faith in its future, and being not altogether ignorant of the state of public opinion, I will venture to say this much—that the policy of the Tory party, should it be placed in power, will be a policy of calling things by their right names. The occupation of Egypt by the British forces will be called a protectorate of Egypt by the British Empire, having for its object the establishment, in process of time, of a government at Cairo, which shall be consonant with the legitimate and laudable aspirations of the Egyptian people, which shall be able to protect itself alike from internal tumult and from foreign intrigue, which, while it shall develop the undoubted resources of Egypt, shall faithfully discharge the equitable liabilities of its people, and which, as far as human governments can do, shall give promise of prosperity and happiness in the land of the Nile. We are now in Egypt by the sufferance of Europe, but we must endeavour to be in Egypt by the mandate of Europe. Our protectorate, to be effective and authoritative and secure, should be acquiesced in by a European Congress, in which Turkey shall be adequately represented and the rights and powers of the Sultan loyally secured. Our protectorate, if it is to be crowned with success, must not shrink from dealing comprehensively and boldly with the financial indebtedness of Egypt, even though such dealing should involve some pecuniary liability on ourselves. The work, if you undertake it, will be a work of time—perhaps a long time. It will be a work of difficulty, and perhaps a work of danger; but it would be also a work of duty and a work of honour, and from work of that kind Britain has never yet recoiled. It is a work which, if courageously persisted in, will bind more closely to us than heretofore the sympathies of the Mohammedan races, and will establish on deeper foundations our dominions in the East. Our aims are honour, peace, and freedom, and we should not shrink from prosecuting those aims, if need be, by force of arms. Conscious of their magnanimity, we would go boldly forward, knowing well that the results of our policy would surely be to undo the heavy burdens and to let the oppressed go free.

WAR POLICY IN EGYPT.

(HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 3, 1884.)

I consider that if the Government sits silent under the speech which has been delivered by the leader of the Opposition, they will plead guilty. Is there absolutely no reply to make? The right hon. gentleman had only asked once more, for the hundredth time since Parliament met, for a clear statement of the Government policy. That, Sir, is the demand which not only the Opposition and the whole country make, but which the whole of Europe makes. What are you doing now, and what do you intend to do? Her Majesty's Government are not only spending enormous sums of money on military and naval operations, and are not only careless in asking the vote of Parliament for these operations, but, in response to hopeless appeals of every sort for an explanation of their policy, they preserve an absolute and inviolable silence. I want hon. gentlemen opposite to recollect the indignation of the right hon. gentleman and his colleagues at the policy which the late Government pursued in a time of the gravest crisis, because, as they said, they did not give full information to Parliament. You are now in occupation of Egypt, and more or less in occupation of the Soudan. The Government is committing the country to Heaven knows what, and no power on earth can extract a tittle of information from them. What is the policy of the Government? I was surprised when the hon. baronet (Sir Wilfred Lawson) got up to move the adjournment of the House that only two other members of the Radical party (Mr. Labouchere and Mr. Passmore Edwards) rose in support of him. After a battle, without exception the bloodiest this country has fought for years—a battle absolutely unprovoked except by the Government—the representatives of the peace party in this House literally allowed the only sincere man amongst them to stand up alone.

RADICAL PARTY ALL HUMBUG.

I have said in the country, and I repeat it now, that the Radical party is all humbug. Can I desire a stronger proof of that assertion than the conduct of the Radical party to-night? Where, I should like to know, after this frightful slaughter, is the right hon. gentleman the member for Birmingham (Mr. Bright), the apostle of peace? He stood at the door, looked in for a moment, saw the subject was awkward, and ran away.

Where is the member for Merthyr (Mr. H. Richard)? He is here now, but was he in the House when the hon. baronet stood up? The hon. member, who is the President of the Peace Society, and who wishes to settle all matters by arbitration—did he get up and support the hon. baronet in his condemnation of this most ruthless slaughter by the Government? Will the Government explain this? If not, it will be for the country to explain it for them. Will they explain why they thought proper to censure the late Government for the invasion of Zululand for the purpose of protecting our British Colony, and themselves attack an Arab chief in the Soudan deserts—with the master of whom they have made peace—who threatened no British colony; who only threatened, or said he was going to threaten, a fort which you admit you are going to abandon? Will the Government explain why they thought proper to make peace with the Transvaal Boers after having sustained three disgraceful defeats, and now, for no object whatsoever, make an absolutely unprovoked attack on this Arab chief, slaughtering, with their superior weapons, 3,000 or 4,000 of his followers? Will you explain that inconsistency?

THE HYPOCRISY OF THE GOVERNMENT.

Now I come to the hypocrisy of the Government. I asked the Secretary of State for War on Tuesday whether General Graham had power to negotiate with Osman Digna, and the noble lord told me that he supposed General Graham had the usual instructions which British generals had. It is quite clear that General Graham did not have powers to negotiate with Osman Digna, because on Wednesday the Government despatched a telegram to the General ordering him to enter into negotiations with Osman Digna. What are those negotiations? A British officer is sent out with a piece of paper containing a message, written most probably in English, which he sticks in the sand at a distance of two or three miles from the fortifications, and then retires, considering he has done all that is necessary for the purpose of entering into negotiations with Osman Digna. Do the Government think they have satisfied the demands of humanity by this extraordinary and ridiculous proceeding, and by then going on with perfect impunity to slaughter the Arabs. Are these the kind of negotiations that were

meant to be carried on with Osman Digna? Were there not natives with General Graham who could have explained to Osman Digna the views of the Government, and have told them they were no longer fighting an effete and corrupt Government, but against British forces? How can you say you have satisfied the claims of humanity by sending out this message? Now, sir, about this defence of Suakin, I want the House to remark what the Prime Minister says. He wishes the House to believe that this expedition was necessary for its defence. But then I ask why was not it undertaken weeks and weeks ago, because this is certain—that the Government would never have sent the expedition had they not been forced to do so by the House of Commons. Now the right hon. gentleman stated that if we had defended Suakin in the way the hon. baronet suggests, we should have had to leave a garrison in the place, and have been left there for an indefinite period. What is the conclusion we must draw from that? Then the course her Majesty's Government is proposing means we are to come away from Suakin. This only makes the conduct of the Government more hopelessly guilty; for in defending a town which they intend to evacuate they had slaughtered 3,000 or 4,000 Arabs. The Government may think this a matter unworthy of their notice, but Brighton did not think it, and a day will come—and it may be very soon—when Brighton will not be the only constituency in this country which will have to give its judgment on the policy of the Government, and then the Government may regret, when it is too late, that they did not yield to the entreaties of the hon. baronet and the leader of the Opposition to state frankly their policy. The pretext thought good enough by the Prime Minister to give to the House only proves to me how extraordinarily the House of Commons has sunk in the eyes of the right hon. gentleman. He says it was well known in war that movements which are offensive in their nature are sometimes defensive in their essence.

Mr. GLADSTONE: Offensive in their form.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: What does that come to, that the attack of General Graham was offensive in its form, but not in its nature? Three thousand men or more were slaughtered, as a matter of form, by movements which were not offensive in their nature! A Reuter's telegram informs

us that Osman Digna, with a large force, is encamped in the neighbourhood of Suakin, so that it becomes all the more necessary to have a frank statement by the Government.

RESCUE AND RETIRE.

The Prime Minister the other night accepted the policy of the hon. baronet, "Rescue and Retire!" Whom did we rescue? The 300 soldiers in Tokar. But the greater part of the garrison fought against England at Teb, and they were perfectly happy among the followers of Osman. It was only after the victory of General Graham that they thought it more prudent to express some kind of satisfaction with her Majesty's troops. They were not, I say, rescued, and I call it not the relief, but the recapture, of Tokar, for Tokar had already fallen. I now ask whether the phrase "retire" governs the policy of the Government? Do they intend retiring from Suakin and Khartoum; and if so, when; and when do they mean to carry out the policy of retiring from Egypt proper? The whole of Europe and this country are under the impression that her Majesty's Government are going, within a short time, to retire from Egypt. Will they state that intention openly, and take the judgment of the House upon it? If, again, they mean to occupy Egypt with all the resources of the Empire, let them get up and tell us so, and take the judgment of the House upon it. I hope that until we get a definite statement as to one or other of these policies, hon. gentlemen on both sides of the House will absolutely refuse to grant the supplies necessary to carry on the Government.

AFFAIRS IN THE SOUDAN.

(HOUSE OF COMMONS, MARCH 26, 1884.)

I wish to ask for information under three heads. With respect to the military operations in the Eastern Soudan, the situation continues extremely critical. In four weeks two battles have been fought with no tangible result, and we now learn that General Graham is starting what I would almost call a hunting expedition after the unfortunate Osman Digna, and intends possibly to fight a third battle. In the face of such events we are compelled to ask for information as to the object of such military proceedings. Then it cannot have escaped the notice of hon. gentlemen that in to-day's

newspapers it is stated General Graham would re-embark for Cairo after performing the work mentioned, and leave Suakin to take care of itself. Such military operations are unprecedented, and, at any rate, it will not be said that the House of Commons has, as a whole, allowed these operations to go on without persistently asking for information. If General Graham re-embarks, the tribes will receive notice of the fact, the effect produced by the British victories will be obliterated, Suakin will again be surrounded, and possibly will fall into the hands of what the Government are pleased to call the rebels. There is a much more serious matter I should like to notice—the way in which the forces of this country are being used to enforce slavery. Would it be believed that for an act which every man in this House would approve, Abyssinians who have rendered us valuable services as scouts have been punished and disbanded, while a British admiral has thought it his duty to enforce the laws permitting slavery in Egypt? Again, I would ask, have the Government finally decided to give up all intention of opening up communication between Suakin and Berber this year, and have they issued any instructions? I hold that the House has a right to pronounce upon the policy of the Government, whatever it may be, before it is carried out.

THE LAST CHANCE OF A RUINED GAMBLER.

But the most serious feature of the case is the position of Khartoum and General Gordon. That officer was sent to Khartoum as the last card which the Government could play. Like the ruined gambler, who found by chance a gold piece in his pocket and staked it in order to see whether he could not get back what he had lost, the Government have utilized Gordon, and with the result I have always noticed under such circumstances—failure. They have now this absolutely before them—that the mission of General Gordon is an acknowledged and accomplished failure. This being so, the question arises, What do the Government propose to do? The Prime Minister has told us that General Gordon has gone on a mission that is essentially pacific, but we now know that what remained of it was essentially warlike. It has already commenced military operations, and possibly General Gordon is no more. What do the Government propose to do for that devoted officer? Do they intend to remain indifferent to his fate? If the

question as to the policy of Her Majesty's Government which I have asked had not been put to-day it could not have been put before Easter. In regard to General Gordon's mission, the Government have taken the surest course to ensure failure, and perhaps the death of that most distinguished man. General Gordon went to Khartoum and entered into negotiations with the leader of the native forces there; whilst, at the same time, Her Majesty's Government authorized offensive military operations against a portion of those forces. Well, how could the Government imagine that General Gordon could carry on peace negotiations with any prospect of success, while they themselves, in a region not far distant, carried on military operations of an offensive character. I should have thought it was obvious to every one—even to the benighted minds of those who preside over the destinies of this country—that there was no precedent for a commander of an army opening negotiations with an enemy, and at the same time attacking and slaughtering that enemy. Such a thing has never happened where *bona-fide* peace proceedings were going on. The result of all we have done in Egypt is the failure of General Gordon. The military operations have had no result so far as England's policy in Egypt is concerned, though they have had very decided results so far as General Gordon and his relations with the Mahdi are concerned. When General Gordon left this country the whole of the region about Berber and Sennaar was in a state of quietude, and continued so until shortly after two bloody battles had been fought by her Majesty's Government. Then in this country for the first time we heard that the telegraph wire had been cut, that it was mended, that it was cut again, and remained cut, and that the whole country between Berber and Khartoum was in a state of rebellion. I think that there was something like cause and effect. They have had a combination of military offensive operations, while at the same time peace negotiations—that was to say if they were really *bona-fide*—were being carried out. Has anything more ineffably silly ever been proposed to Parliament? General Gordon's mission deserved to fail, even if he had not supported the Government in these military operations.

THAT ABANDONED SCOUNDREL, ZEBEHR PASHA.

The first act of General Gordon on arriving at Khartoum

was to proclaim free trade in slaves. Her Majesty's Government did not take the course on that occasion which they were forced to take in regard to Admiral Hewett—they did not telegraph him that such a proclamation would not be tolerated by a British Parliament. General Gordon's second act was to demand for the pacification of the part of the Soudan that that most abandoned scoundrel, Zebehr Pasha, should be appointed Governor of Khartoum—Zebehr Pasha, a wretch with a record of crime which could not be surpassed by the characters of those bugbears of the Prime Minister, Acmet Aga and Chefket Pasha. I admit the gallantry and devotion with which General Gordon came to the rescue of a dying Government, but General Gordon is not now free from the criticism of Parliament. I maintain that those two acts of General Gordon deserved the severest censure of this House, and deserved to fail. Any British officer who imagined that the country or Parliament would sanction such proceedings as General Gordon had initiated must be utterly unfit and incompetent to be employed in a position of authority, as bereft of all reason. In the face of all that has been done, what is the policy of Her Majesty's Government now? They have perpetrated massacre and perpetuated slavery. What I want to know is, What are the Government going to do next? Are Her Majesty's Government going to adopt a policy of "rescue," or a policy of "retire?" There is at least one rescue which Her Majesty's Government should adopt, and that is the rescue of General Gordon, for if the life of that man is lost owing to the negligence, indifference, callousness, or heartlessness of Her Majesty's Government, that Government will not occupy their seats for twenty-four hours after the news is known. It seems to me that the Government are utterly unable to foresee a catastrophe, or to provide for the results of a catastrophe when it has occurred. That was shown in the annihilation of Hicks Pasha's force, and in the defeat of Baker Pasha's army. Everything seems to be founded on the supposition that General Gordon must succeed; but if he succeeded it would be in the maddest journey that has ever been undertaken since that of Mahomet to the Seventh Heaven. General Gordon has failed, and the Government have made no provision for the safety of General Gordon or for rescuing Egypt from the Mahdi. I do not often drop into poetry, but I think the following

quotation from Henry VI. is appropriate to the question in hand :

Amongst the soldiers this is muttered,
That here you maintain several factions ;
And, whilst a field should be despatch'd and fought,
You are disputing of your generals ;
One would have lingering wars, with little cost ;
Another would fly swift, but wanteth wings ;
A third man thinks, without expense at all,
By guileful fair words peace may be obtained.

FINANCIAL EMBARRASMENTS.

Now I would ask the Government what it has done to relieve the people of Egypt from financial embarrassments. The whole thing is a question of finance ; and until the finances of the country are arranged it is impossible for a stable government to be established there. The Rothschilds' million is now gone, and everybody knows there is nothing in the Egyptian treasury. Is there anything unreasonable in asking the Government for a slight sketch of the policy they mean to adopt in regard to the finances of Egypt ? Have the Government no proposals to make for relieving the country from the payment of the cost of the army of occupation, or the abolition of the law of liquidation, or the total abolition of mixed tribunals ? It is impossible, in my opinion, to settle these matters without a congress of the Powers. I believe that the initial and fatal mistake of the Prime Minister was when he abandoned that cardinal point of his foreign policy when out of office—viz., the concert of Europe. I do not believe that this Egyptian affair will be settled until we have once more recurred to the concert of Europe. In asking for information from the Government, I do not expect to get much from the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs (Lord E. Fitzmaurice), who seems to occupy about the same position as myself as to the intentions of Her Majesty's Government—viz., that of hopeless ignorance. The noble lord will, no doubt, say to me, "What then is your object in taking up the time of the House—is it to embarrass the Government, and to do away with the Cabinet ?" If any one entertains any such supposition they are hopelessly wrong. I have no wish whatever just now to do anything that would destroy the present Government. I am quite content that the present Government should stay where they are.

"THOSE BLAMELESS AND RESPECTABLE GENTLEMEN ON
THE FRONT BENCH."

There are some silly people who have said that there is a want of cordiality between right hon. gentlemen on the front Opposition bench and myself. The statement is too idiotic to require comment. If I were the bitterest and deadliest enemy of those right hon. gentlemen I could not wish them a worse fate, could not inflict on them a greater mortification, could not sow for them a more fertile harvest of ruin and disgrace, than to impose on them the odious responsibility of succeeding to the task of clearing out the mess which the noble lord and his colleagues have so cleverly manufactured on the banks of the Nile. No, I will be no party to leading those blameless and respectable right hon. gentlemen on the front Opposition bench into such a pit of perdition. My object is not to elicit information, because I know that it will be useless, but rather to do what I can to arouse and stimulate public attention. I know that Her Majesty's Government have a great and ineffable contempt for the House of Commons, and if it is any satisfaction to right hon. gentlemen to know, I might say that the House of Commons have the same contempt for them. There is one power which has some little influence on Her Majesty's Government—the power of public opinion. It is discussion and debate that does more to arouse, or contribute to arouse, public opinion. On this question, which so vitally affects our Empire in the East, public opinion is our only safeguard. It is with this object of arousing public attention that I have laboured since the beginning of the session, and shall continue to do so whenever the arrangements of the Government afford an opportunity, perfectly regardless of any criticism or denunciation, and perfectly regardless of the progress of those legislative measures for which neither I nor the country care two penny bits.

THE RADICAL PARTY.

(AT BIRMINGHAM, APRIL 15, 1884.)

I find myself on a platform consecrated to the memories of Mr. Bright and Mr. Cobden, on a platform from which

has been poured forth with licentious exuberance all the fictitious facts and fabricated doctrine of the straitest sect of the Radical Pharisee; and instead of repeating, as I ought to do, after the manner of a parrot, such scraps of wisdom as I may have picked up and assimilated from the lips of those high priests of the Radical creed, I propose to ask your kind indulgence while I suggest certain reasons against your reposing or renewing confidence in the doctrines of the preachers whom I have reverently alluded to. Birmingham, ever since the Reform Bill of 1832, with the exception of three years, during which Mr. Spooner was its representative, has adhered with consistency and unwavering fidelity—a fidelity which I am not prepared to censure—to the fortunes of the Radical party. So steadfast has been that allegiance that your great city has come to be considered the pocket borough of the Radical party, and to a continuance of that allegiance the Radicals maintain and assert what amounts to a sort of Divine right.

THE RADICAL PARTY PLAYED OUT.

It is that title which I am here to-night to contest and to deny. I am not here to deny the services which the Radical party has rendered to English civilization. But parties, like empires and all human combinations, wax and wane. The law of perpetual change, the motive principle of the Radical, exercises its fatal effect upon the Radical himself. The place of Mr. Warburton is now filled by Mr. Jesse Collings, and the philosophy of Mr. John Stuart Mill finds its chief apostle in Mr. Bradlaugh. I am not afraid to give to the Radical party all the credit which they claim for past achievements. I will concede to the Radical party, if they like, that the whole of our commercial prosperity which leaped and bounded to such an astonishing height in 1874, was due entirely to Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright. But I will assert with the utmost confidence that a practical, sensible and unemotional consideration of the requirements of the people and the interests of the Empire, combined with a critical analysis of the present position and the present conduct and component parts of the Radical party, will prove beyond all contradiction that that party is utterly played out. First I will prove that the party exists partly by false pretences and partly by a despotic and disciplinary organization opposed to

freedom generally, and to the English nature in particular ; that in its blind and unreasoning fury against political opponents, it has fatally and for ever lost whatever of truth and what little of patriotism it ever possessed. In a word, I will assert and prove that the Radical party is all humbug. The great motto which enabled the Radical party of old days to guide and control the course of events, to make and unmake Ministers and Governments, to win and retain the confidence of mighty cities, was "Peace, retrenchment, and reform;" in other words, non-intervention, rigid economy, and genuine progressive legislation. It is these great principles which gave them power even when few in number, and which they asserted with obstinacy and irrespectively of party on all occasions, small or great. Now, they have half a dozen representatives in the Government : they have a hundred or more representatives in the House of Commons ; they have an effective organization in the country—and with this astonishing result, that "peace, retrenchment, and reform," which used to be the objects of their adoration, which gained for them the confidence of the people, have been trampled upon, repudiated, and reviled.

PEACE.

For four years the Radical party have had unrivalled opportunities for carrying their great principles into practical effect. It was open to them to have forced the Government to retire from Afghanistan. Not one word of complaint or censure did they utter. Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain derived the utmost credit and satisfaction from whatever glory attached to these military operations. In the session of 1881 came the revolt of the Boers, with which every Radical in England was found to sympathize. What was the conduct of the Radical party ? They permitted the Government to attempt to suppress the revolt by force of arms, to sustain three desperate defeats, to send out an immense armament to South Africa, and they refused to join in any censure of the Government for those abortive and disgraceful military operations. With the session of 1882 came the struggle for Egyptian freedom undertaken by Arabi Pasha. What was the conduct of the Radical party ? Again they permitted the Government to plunge into war to attempt to suppress another struggle for liberty, to destroy great towns, to fight a bloody battle, and not a word of censure would they utter

against those proceedings. Now, in this session the Radical party have not only not censured, but they have connived at and consented to the most sanguinary and the most fruitless military operations which English history can record. The responsibility for all this violation of peace rests on the Radical party. At any moment they could have arrested each and all of these wars. At any moment they could have withdrawn their representatives from the Government and turned the Government out of office. If they had been mindful of their principles, by which they gained great confidence, or their traditions, they would have done so, no matter what the result might be. But no; they persistently refused to censure these proceedings, and they reviled and denounced all those who did try to censure those proceedings, and they permitted their hatred of the Tory party to utterly eradicate from their memories and their minds the first and the greatest of their great principles—peace. For my own part I hate war. But there is one thing which I hate more than war—useless and unprofitable war. Tried by this test, the Radical party comes out very badly; their war in Afghanistan resulted in the taking of Merv by Russia; their war in the Transvaal resulted in the perpetration of every kind of atrocity by Zulus, by Bechuanas, and by Boers; and their war in Egypt is still going on. Heaven only knows when it is going to end. But one way and another the Radicals have permitted the expenditure of ten millions of money and of thousands of human lives; and I ask, with the greatest confidence, can they produce anything whatever in the shape of a result which can be satisfactory to a practical-minded people?

RETRENCHMENT.

With regard to retrenchment, I find that in 1875, the second year of office of a Tory Government, the expenditure was seventy-five millions, and that in 1882, the second year of office of a Radical Government, it was eighty-five millions. In 1876, the third year of office of a Tory Government, the expenditure was eighty millions; in 1883, the third year of a Radical Government, it was eighty-nine millions. If the Radical party had brought forward and supported in a genuine manner a motion for the reduction of expenditure—and when the expenditure came to such a sum as eighty-nine

millions it was about time—it must have been carried, and the Government must have either submitted or resigned. But they contented themselves with one or two bogus speeches and one or two sham motions. The Ministers laughed at them, and the estimate went on merrily rolling up.

REFORM.

As regards reform, great have been the promises ; meagre has been the performance. My contention is that there has been no obstruction sufficient to excuse Her Majesty's Government. They have a majority of 100 in the House of Commons. They have had four years of uncontrolled power, and yet their programme is scarcely touched—just nibbled at and nothing more. To go to the country and tell the country that that is the fault of the Tory party is just as though some great hulking fellow, six feet high, with sufficient strength to fell an ox, were to go running whining to the magistrate and complain that he had been assaulted and hindered in his work by some tiny little boy six years of age. Referring to the Merchant Shipping Bill, I am disposed to place immense reliance on Mr. Chamberlain's statements. But my opinion has been altogether changed by Mr. Chamberlain's own conduct. Mr. Chamberlain is in this dilemma—either he is content for party purposes to allow the lives of British sailors to be wantonly sacrificed when by legislation he may prevent that sacrifice, or else all the statements which he has made against the shipowners are untrue from beginning to end ; in which case a class and a trade upon which the whole of their industry depended has been cruelly, malignantly, fruitlessly, and to no purpose aspersed, damaged and held up to public odium. Mr. Chamberlain's conduct has not been genuine in this matter, and it warrants me in saying, and it warrants you in believing, that the Radical party is all humbug. As regards the extension of the franchise, I will quote from a speech of Mr. Bright in 1858, in which he said that, whenever a Reform Bill is introduced, "never take your eyes for one moment from the question of redistribution of seats, for in it lies the great subject of dispute, and, unless you guard your rights, you will have to fight your battle over again, and begin it again the very day after the Bill has passed." But now all is changed. Not only is

redistribution not mentioned in the Government Reform Bill, but even the very plan is not disclosed, and the modern Radicals literally hoot at any one who, acting on the indisputable maxim of Mr. Bright, expresses the slightest curiosity on the subject. Does not this make clear the position that the Radical party of the present day and the Radical party of the old day are two different parties, One was a party of high principles ; the other is a party of low expediency. The fault I find with the present Government and with the Radical party is this—that they will never face real difficulties. The assimilation of the county and borough franchise is simple enough for any intellect—almost easy enough for any fool. But the question of redistribution demands the highest qualities of constructive statesmanship, and for that reason it is thrown aside.

I came here to-night to ask you whether this slipshod, slovenly, happy-go-lucky, and, I may add, dishonest mode of proceeding is worthy of a British Government or worthy of the English people. I do not know what would be the policy of the Tory party. I am not the least bit in the confidence of the leaders. They have preserved a prudent—perhaps an over-prudent—reticence. This much I can safely say, however, I do not for a moment imagine that their Government would be more feeble or more unfortunate than the present, and I hope and believe they would do much better, and that their policy should be one of honesty and courage. It should be a policy which will grapple with difficulties and deal with them, and not avoid them or postpone them. It should be a popular policy, and not a class policy. It should be a policy of activity for the national welfare, combined with a zeal for the Imperial security:

PARTY ORGANIZATION.

(AT BIRMINGHAM, APRIL 16, 1884.)

You are a young club (the Midland Conservative Club), but you have already made prodigious strides. You are united not only for social intercourse, but for political objects. You have banded yourselves together to support

the interests of the Tory party in the Midland counties, and you can do this in the most effectual way by supplying what has long been a great want in Conservative organizations—voluntary assistance. The organization of a political party is a matter of very intense interest. In the old days before the Reform Act of 1867 political organization was of a very different nature from what it is now. As a rule, they had the leader of the party, who was not often or very directly concerned in electoral matters. The management of electoral organization was generally left to the Parliamentary “Whip,” who was assisted by a paid agent in the metropolis, who was generally a person of legal attainments. Between them they disposed of certain funds, known as the Reform Fund and the Carlton Fund, and they were in correspondence with certain other gentlemen in the constituencies, who also, as a rule, possessed legal attainments. These parties possessed each other’s confidence, and were well calculated to carry on delicate and secret negotiations ; and the ordinary concomitants of those parties which appeared at election times was a species of individual (who I am happy to say has almost entirely vanished from this country) and known as the “Man in the Moon,” and those other individuals generally known as the free and independent electors, who always carefully deliberated so long over their votes that they rarely recorded them until just before the close of the poll. That is the old organization, not at all confined to the Conservative party. It was equally the organization of the Whig party, and no doubt it may have been suited to the morality of the day, and it may have been suited to the ten-pound householder : but that organization has become quite obsolete on account of the great change which has taken place in the dimensions of our modern constituencies. Formerly the organizer had to deal with classes and cliques. Now he has to deal with intelligent, instructed, and independent masses of electors. These masses cannot be dictated to, they cannot be driven, they cannot be wire-pulled, they must be argued with and persuaded.

ORGANIZATION.

That is the first of the duties which devolve upon the members of this club. I do not think I shall commit any indiscretion if I admit that as regards party organiza-

tion the Liberals have been a little ahead of the Conservative party. They have been the first to adopt that peculiar form of organization known as the caucus. I hope you will not be shocked if I tell you that I see nothing whatever objectionable in that form of organization. The caucus simply means this, that great masses of people thinking one way feel that they are too unwieldy to manage their own affairs directly, and they confine the management to certain elected persons in whom they have confidence, and who are responsible to them. But the Radicals always push things to an extreme. They have pushed the caucus to extremes for which it was never meant to be put to, and they have done it for ends which are undoubtedly mischievous and dangerous to the freedom of our political life. The caucus, as they know it in Birmingham, has not been content to limit its work to party organization, but has endeavoured to interfere, more or less, and rather more than less, tyrannically in dictating the policy which should be pursued in political questions by our public men. When the Birmingham caucus presumes to decide for itself public questions of the highest interest and the greatest delicacy, and to issue its mandates to other associations in the country, and even to members of Parliament, the caucus altogether transgresses the limits of its functions. The Conservative party, though perhaps it does not move so rapidly, moves more surely than the Liberals. The former have their popular organization. The Conservative associations, so far as I know, have always confined themselves to the duties of party organization, and have not attempted to follow the evil examples which have been set to them by their Liberal friends in Birmingham. Our organization is quite as popular as the Liberal organization. In Lancashire, Yorkshire, and some parts of the south of England, these Conservative associations have spread and flourished, but there still remains a great field of work which is yet untouched.

THE NATIONAL UNION OF CONSERVATIVE ASSOCIATIONS.

I take this opportunity of saying that the National Union of Conservative Associations is the centre and nucleus, not of all, but of many, of the Conservative associations throughout the country. The aim of the Union is to extend not only in our great towns, but in our counties,

and also in our villages and hamlets, popular principles of Conservative organization. The Union has made great efforts in this direction. It does not meet with quite as much encouragement at head-quarters as I should like to see, for there is still a small knot of people whose minds dwell affectionately on the past, and who look back with some longing to the happy days when organization was conducted on those elementary principles which I have described. They regard, with some apprehension, the popular voice, but I have no doubt all this will soon subside. I look to this and other associations to popularize the organization of our party. Our object is to obtain a representative executive who will hold themselves responsible to the electors who appoint them. In fact, my idea, and it is the idea of my friends, is that the Tory party shall be like the English people—a self-governing party. That is the only form of organization by which Conservatives can attract great masses of the people to the support of the political opinions they profess. It is in the power of such associations as this to give the most enlightened instruction to the mass of the people on subjects which, undoubtedly, most intimately concern their welfare.

CITIZEN CLUBS.

I would especially urge upon you the importance of taking steps for the foundation of clubs for the artisan classes. My idea in political organization is to try everything. We may fail, but at any rate until we fail we do not know whether the thing is good or bad. In the great county of Lancaster there are numbers of these citizen clubs in all the large towns, and I believe that is one of the reasons why the Tory party is so strong there. Let Birmingham also lead the way in this matter. Birmingham has done much service to the Liberal party in party organization. Let it be a little impartial, and do good service to the Conservative party also in this respect. Let the extension and popularizing of the organization of the Conservative party be the aim of every member of the Midland Conservative club. That is my respectful and humble advice to you as your President for the year. Above all things, let us be up and stirring. Do not let us go to sleep. I have a sort of idea that an election is not far off. I do not quite

know the week when it will come, but I can scent it in the air, and my opinions on this subject, which a day or two ago only partook of the nature of suspicions, have almost deepened into absolute certainty from the curious act which is now being done by a certain Minister. Sir William Harcourt has gone down to his constituents at Derby. Now, since the year 1880, when, owing to a consultation between Mr. Plimsoll and his family, a vacancy was found for the wandering Home Secretary, Sir William Harcourt has not been near his constituents to address them on public affairs ; and my idea is, that Sir William Harcourt would not have gone near his constituents if he had not certain reasons for knowing that he may have to meet them in a disagreeable way before long. I think it my duty to remind you that the last election, which was undoubtedly disastrous to the Conservative party, was lost by us principally on account of our defective and neglected organization. I can tell you as a matter of fact, that that was the opinion of Lord Beaconsfield, and no better judge of politics has ever existed in this country. Now, for Heaven's sake, do not let us be caught napping again. I am certain that if every Conservative in the country will endeavour to realize to himself for a moment the immense political questions involved in the next election he will not lose a moment before plunging into the fray and offering his services to the Conservative association or Conservative candidate of his locality. Why, in the election which is coming before long the first principles of our English politics are involved. The Radical party of the present day are so numerous, so bold, and so enterprising, that if the Tory party are not on their guard, and do not equal them in activity, they will wake up one morning to find that the English Constitution has entirely disappeared, and that some pinchbeck American arrangement has been substituted in its stead.

THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN RADICALS AND TORIES.

May I say something on the first principles of our politics, and endeavour to impress upon you the nature of the topics which you should not be afraid of dealing with when you are endeavouring to persuade to your views the mass of electors? After all, what is the great

difference which distinguishes the two great political parties who endeavour to attract the support of the English people? The Tory party cling with veneration and affection to the institutions of our country. The Radicals regard them with aversion, and will give always multitudinous and specious reasons for their unhappy frame of mind. But can we give no good and convincing reason to the people for the faith which is in us? We do not defend the Constitution from any silly sentiment of the past, or from any superstition about Divine right or hereditary excellence. We defend the Constitution solely on the ground of its utility to the people. It is on the ground of utility alone that we go forth to meet our foe, and if we fail to make good our ground in utilitarian arguments and for utilitarian ends, then let the present combination of Throne, Lords, and Commons be for ever swept away. The hereditary throne is the surest device which has ever been imagined or invented for the perpetuation of civil order, and for that first necessity of civilized society, a continuity of government; and he will be a bold man in argument who will assert that the hereditary character of the British throne is a device, or even a defect, when we remember that the English monarchy has endured for upwards of a thousand years. What device of the wisest philosopher or the most acute mathematician could have discovered a monarch more perfect for all the purposes of monarchy than the one whom hereditary descent of a thousand years has provided for us? There are many in this town who glibly tell you that the monarchy is too expensive for us. I reply that it would be impossible to devise a form of governmental security as effective, and yet cheaper and more simple—and that if in an evil hour we were to listen to these silly tattlers, the sums of money which we should ultimately have to pay for police and military in times of administrative changes—the fluctuations of credit, the displacements of capital, the losses to the interests of industry and labour which constant inevitable administrative changes will produce, and the destruction of property which, in the absence of any recognised central authority, they will at times occasion—instead of being counted by the few hundreds of thousands which are the cost price of a hereditary throne, will be counted by millions and millions.

THE HOUSE OF LORDS.

So much for the first estate of the realm, which the Radical party calmly threatens and darkly scowls at. The immediate object of the Radical detestation is the House of Lords, in which they pretend to discover all the most execrable forms of class prejudice and privilege. I have no doubt that much of the enthusiasm with which the Radical party clamours for the Reform Bill is due to the hope they entertain that the passage of the Bill may possibly provoke a conflict between the Lords and the Commons, in which the Lords might for ever go down. I am not concerned to defend all the actions of the House of Lords in modern times, but I could, if I like, point to many bright instances of statesmanship and liberality on their part. The House of Lords makes mistakes at times, I have no doubt; but even in this respect they will compare very favourably with Mr. Gladstone's Government—or even with the Radical party. I maintain that the House of Lords should be preserved solely on the hard ground of its utility to the people. I find in it a check to popular impulses arising from imperfect information, not only an aggregation of political wisdom and experience such as no other country could produce, but above all I find in it the only effectual barrier against that most fatal blow to freedom—the one-man power—that power which has more than once enslaved the liberties of France, and which every moment terrifies the defenceless citizens of the United States. In Birmingham, on a small scale, you have had some little experience of the one-man power. Well, from a National and Imperial point of view, we need never be alarmed about the danger of the one-man power so long as the House of Lords endures, be he minister, be he capitalist, be he demagogue, be he Mr. Gladstone, or Mr. Chamberlain, or Mr. Schnadhorst, or Mr. Bradlaugh, or the Claimant. Against that bulwark of popular liberty and civil order he will dash himself in vain. The House of Lords may perhaps move slowly, be over-cautious about accepting the merits of the legislation of the House of Commons, and be extreme in their solicitude for the rights of property. That is the small price the people have to pay for being guarded against so great a danger. The House of

Lords are recruited from the people; their long descent and lofty aims enable them to fear neither Ministers nor men. They fear only the people, whose trustees they are. I defend also on utilitarian grounds the Church of England, that other bugbear of the Radical party, because of its efforts not only for religion, but in the cause of education and charity. When compared with other creeds and sects it is essentially the Church of English liberty, including all shades of religious thought and all conditions of men. I cannot imagine that the English people will ever gratify sectarian animosities, or pander to infidel proclivities by demolishing that institution which elevates a nation, and consecrates the action of a State.

“WHY I VOTED AGAINST THE FRANCHISE BILL.”

Last, but not least—first rather in the scheme of Tory politics—come the Commons of England, with their marvellous history, their ancient descent, their unequalled principles, and I believe their splendid future. The social progress of the people by means of legislative reform in the lines, and carried on under the protection of the institutions whose utility I have described to you—that must be the policy of the Tory party. The industries of the people must be stimulated and protected by a lightening of the load of taxation and by a large redistribution of the incidence of taxation. Our efforts to emancipate our brethren from the vices of an undeveloped civilization, such as intemperance, crime, and a weak standard of morality, must be encouraged and facilitated. No class interests should be allowed to stand in the way of this mighty movement, and with this movement the Tory party must not only sympathize, but identify itself. Social reform, producing direct and immediate benefit to the community, that must be the Conservative cry, as opposed to the foolish scream for organic change by the Radicals, who waste their time in attacking institutions whose destruction would only endanger popular freedom. While we leave the social condition of the people precisely where it was before, we must apply this test to every legislative proposal—every political movement—every combination of circumstances and phenomena, and we shall know the line of action to adopt. I

have long tried to make as my motto the phrase used recently by Mr. Gladstone, "Trust the people." There are a few in the Conservative party who have still that lesson to learn, and who do not yet understand that the Tory party of to-day must no longer be dependent upon the small and narrow class identified with the ownership of land ; but that its strength must be found and developed in our large towns as well as our country districts. Trust the people, and they will follow us in the defence of the Constitution against any and every foe. I may be asked, "Why, if you trust the people, did you vote against the Reform Bill?" It is a plausible, but a foolish question. The government of England is a government by party, and it is a general duty of the followers of Sir Stafford Northcote to resist the legislation proposed by Mr. Gladstone. My actual reason for voting against the Reform Bill was the omission from it of redistribution. Extension of the franchise and redistribution are one and indivisible. I did not vote against it from distrust of the people. The agricultural labourer will never demolish the Constitution. I have no fear of the democracy. Given a fair arrangement of the constituencies, and one part of England would correct and balance the other. But I do not think electoral reform is a matter of national urgency. I believe that Parliament can better devote its time to other matters, such as finance, local taxation, commerce, Ireland, and Egypt. It is, however, a matter of ministerial and party urgency, and it is being treated as a matter of party tactics, and for the purpose of uniting and stimulating a nearly shattered Liberal majority. It was for these reasons I voted against the Reform Bill. The English Constitution will endure and thrive whether we add two millions or two hundred to the electorate. So long as the Tory party is true to its principles, mindful of its history, faithful to the policy bequeathed to it by Lord Beaconsfield, the future of the Constitution and the destinies of the Empire are in the hands of the Tory party, and if only the leaders of the party in Parliament will have the courage of their convictions, grasp their responsibilities, and adapt their policy to those responsibilities, and if they are supported and stimulated by the people in the large towns, that future and those destinies are great and assured. To rally

the people round the throne, to unite the throne with the people—a loyal throne and a patriotic people—that is our policy, and that is our faith.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

(AT BIRMINGHAM, APRIL 17, 1884.)

Sir William Harcourt's speech to his constituents at Derby is in part marked by a feature which is not usually prominent in Ministerial speeches—candour and modesty. He compared himself to a mountain stream which has developed into a mighty river, and he says that whereas in former days he used to be a brawler, a bubbler, and a babbler, he has now become gentle, fertile, and dull. I will not question the accuracy of Sir William Harcourt's description of himself as far as relates to former days, but when Sir William Harcourt describes the present Home Secretary as "gentle," he wanders into the region of romance; when he describes himself as "fertile," he is anticipating the future; and when he describes himself as "dull," he deviates into truth. He said that the one thing which he longs for of all others is what he calls the "wild freshness" of Opposition, and I imagine that we are all gathered here to-night to gratify the Home Secretary's wish. Sir W. Harcourt went on to criticise the action of the Opposition in Parliament, and said the Opposition has no other object in view than to worry her Majesty's Government out of office. Not very long ago Sir William Harcourt thought it part of his duty to worry an English Government with much the same amount of ferocity as a bull-dog worries a cat; but those were the days when he enjoyed the wild freshness of Opposition. Even if he is correct in the description which he gives of the policy of the Opposition, the Opposition would not be in the least to blame; but I question the correctness of the description, and I do not think that the Opposition has any desire of worrying her Majesty's Government out of office. What has been our object, and what we are endeavouring to do, is to worry her Majesty's Government to a performance of their duty. I am bound to say, from one reason and another, principally from the hopeless character of the present Government, that the Opposition has not been

successful in its efforts, and the Government still continues to wander everywhere but in the path of duty. Yesterday, in describing the policy of the Government, the Home Secretary said they intend, having saved Egypt from a military insurrection, to settle her affairs, and leave the Egyptians to govern themselves. There are two alternatives, and the Government, as far as I can make out, declined to adopt either. They will not settle the affairs of Egypt, nor will they leave the Egyptians to govern themselves. Time passes very quickly, and we are apt to forget that her Majesty's Government has been nearly two years in Egypt; in the month of August next it will be two years since the battle of Tel-el-Kebir, and without any doubt whatever, things are worse in that country than they were when the battle of Tel-el-Kebir was fought. The administration of justice, the arrangements for police are worse, the financial indebtedness of the country has increased, and the country is in a ruinous condition. The native army, which was to be established under our auspices, is universally acknowledged to be utterly worthless and ruinously expensive, and what every one wants to know all over the country is, when are the Government going to begin their work. It really reminds me of the refrain of a song which used to be very popular, the chorus of which is—

“First she would, and then she wouldn't;
Then she could, and then she couldn't.”

That exactly describes the proceedings of the Government towards Egypt, and so they go on with wearisome monotony.

Sir William Harcourt says that he would not protect and he would not take up the administration of Egypt, and he says that we were precluded from adopting these courses by our engagements to Europe. But he entirely forgets whether he is right or wrong in the statement which he made, that we are under the most solemn engagements to Europe to establish order in Egypt and restore the efficiency of the Egyptian Government. These engagements to Europe are of far more importance than the other engagements which Sir William Harcourt mentioned, and though the patience of Europe had been long, and her forbearance great, I cannot believe that the nations of Europe will tolerate the state of things which go on in Egypt much longer, and before very long a heavy account will be presented against

Her Majesty's Government for damage to the interests of European nations at Cairo. In the course of a few months I have no doubt they will have to send a large military force to Khartoum, either to support General Gordon, or to rescue him, or to avenge his death. They will have to take over the Egyptian administration, because they have by their policy utterly and hopelessly destroyed the native administration, and they will have to make proposals to Europe for the settlement of Egyptian finance, and for the abolition of the international tribunal. They must make these proposals, I believe, to the Powers of Europe in congress, and if they are prepared to give to the Powers of Europe a guarantee for the preservation of order in Egypt, and a guarantee to some extent for Egyptian indebtedness, I make no doubt whatever that they will get from Europe a mandate which will permit them to protect effectually British interests in the East. That is, I firmly believe, the inevitable policy which is falling upon the country; it is no use the country complaining, because that was the price which they have to pay for indulging in the luxury of a Gladstonian Administration. As far as I can make out, the first step towards carrying out that policy—the first essential step—is to get rid of the present Government. They have had many times unequalled forbearance on the part of the people; they have failed and failed over and over again.

FREE EDUCATION.

(AT BIRMINGHAM, APRIL 17, 1884.)

The policy of the great Act of 1870 has been mistaken by some of those who are actively engaged in the work of education. It has been supposed that the object of that Act was to abolish voluntary schools. The object of the Act was nothing of the kind. The object of the late Act was to develop the national education of England by supplementing rather than by suppressing the voluntary schools which already existed. Voluntary schools, wherever they existed, and carried on national education according to the laws of the land; were not only to be countenanced by

the State, but were to receive from the State a certain amount of pecuniary assistance. That was the policy of the Education Act of 1870, and that was the policy which, I make bold to say, Parliament will continue to follow. I believe that the question of national education must shortly be dealt with by Parliament in a large and liberal spirit, and I believe that it is undoubtedly connected with the great question of local taxation. I know of no method more appropriate or more politic by which the local burden could be relieved than by the State taking upon itself the whole expense connected with the national education of the country. This will be done, I have no doubt, by following the lines of the Education Act of 1870, by the State availing itself of all the machinery which it finds at work and actually in existence for the purpose of promoting education, and by subsidizing that machinery, whatever may be its nature, to the extent of the expense they may have incurred in the elementary education of each child. That I believe, gentlemen, will be the work of a future Parliament. I trust that it will be a work which will not be long delayed. National education is of the highest importance to the people of this country. Parliament is about to confer upon the people of this country a large, a very large, extension of political votes. That, at any rate, appears to be the policy of the House of Commons at the moment, and if we wish the people of England to be in a position to avail themselves to the very utmost of these political rights, and to use these political privileges for the benefit of their country, we must not be slack, but, on the contrary, we must be forward and active in promoting the work of education among our children. It is, gentlemen, in the hope that the voluntary schools, the foundation of one of which I have had the honour of laying to-day, may continue to co-operate with activity, with intelligence, with moderation, in the work of national education that I have come here to address a few words to you to-day. And in that hope I am sure all of you present will join. At all times I should consider it one of the chief parts of my duty, as a member of the House of Commons, to take the most earnest interest, and to do all that is in my power, to promote the national education of the people by assisting the voluntary schools.

THE RESCUE OF GORDON.

(HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 12, 1884.)

Her Majesty's Government are to be congratulated on having obtained the support of an Irish patriot (Mr. O'Connor Power). I am afraid that in all probability it will not be a solid advantage, because at present the hon. gentleman is altogether out of harmony with the general body of his colleagues. We know what Irish patriotism is worth when once it becomes incorporated into a Government majority. When it stands alone, fighting for its own hand, unconnected with either party, it is often honest and sincere ; but once incorporated into a Government majority it is nothing more than a beggar on the look-out for some substantial mark of favour and patronage. I make, with the greatest liberality, a present to Her Majesty's Government of the Irish patriotism they have secured this afternoon. The hon. member for Mayo boasted that he was the friend of freedom and humanity, and to justify his boast he proposes to vote against the present motion, which expresses regret that the greatest friend of freedom and humanity has not been supported effectually by the Government, and is now placed in a position of imminent peril. I must compliment him, by the way, on the tact he displayed in reminding the House and the Prime Minister of a demonstration that was made the other day on a public occasion—a demonstration which I do not suppose excited any sympathy in this House, and to which I am certain no other speaker would allude.

The question raised by the motion is as clear and simple as any that as ever been presented to this House. The Prime Minister said last night that it was not a manly or a courageous motion, but I beg leave to doubt whether the Prime Minister or his colleagues are any judges on the subject of manliness or courage. They are qualities in which the Government have proved themselves conspicuously deficient, and the absence of these qualities in the Government renders them incapable of detecting them in other people. I can conceive nothing whatever unmanly in the motion of my right hon. friend, but

I could see a great deal of unmanliness and want of courage in the Prime Minister's speech. I wonder whether the Prime Minister recollects a certain debate which occurred in the year 1830, when the Duke of Wellington made a speech on the subject of Parliamentary Reform. When the noble duke sat down there was great buzzing and whispering all round, and colloquies, and an evident amount of consternation and agitation, so much so that the duke himself perceived it, and asked a friend near him the cause. The friend replied, "Your Grace has announced the fall of your Government. That is all." Well, Sir, if the Prime Minister had occupied the singularly advantageous position I occupy here, and had been able to discern the intense, eager expectation of his supporters when he rose to address the House, the deepening gloom which settled down upon them as he proceeded, and the blank dismay which overcame them when he closed his speech; and if he had been able to see what I saw—the buzzings, the whisperings, the colloquies in the lobby—and asked the noble lord the member for Flintshire (Lord Robert Grosvenor) the reason, the noble lord, if he had been an able, an intelligent, and earnest noble lord, would have replied to the Prime Minister, "Sir, you have announced the fall of your Government. That's all."

PONTIUS PILATE.

What was the speech of the Prime Minister? It was an announcement in a most solemn manner, on the part of the Government of the final and definite abandonment of General Gordon. The speech reminded me of the conduct of a Roman Governor more than 1800 years ago when he washed his hands in the face of the multitude. The object of the mission of General Gordon was twofold. It was to rescue the faithful garrisons scattered in the Soudan, and restore freedom and tranquillity to tribes which had long been harassed and oppressed. The whole nation acquiesced in that mission, as I believe it acquiesced in the abandonment of the Soudan, although it felt the solemn and high duties which the abandonment imposed upon them. The very intensity of the interest excited by General Gordon's mission was the measure of the responsibility imposed upon the Government to do their part in assisting that gallant officer

to carry it to a successful issue. The Government now say they have discharged that responsibility. I take leave to say they have not. The Government ought, at the outset of the mission, to have considerably increased their forces in Egypt and moved British troops up the Nile. The first appearance of General Gordon in Upper Egypt prevented disturbance; and if it had been known that the British force in Egypt had been increased and troops moved up the Nile, the first effects of the mission, instead of being transient, would have been permanent. More than that, the season was exceptionally favourable for the movement of troops, and I assert that such a movement of troops would have been perfectly consistent with the pacific character of the mission. The conduct of the Government with respect to Suakin was to give material support to the efforts to restore order in the East of the Soudan; but why was material support withheld from Gordon? That was the first failure of the Government to recognize their responsibility to Gordon. Then they had another warning soon after he arrived at Khartoum. He made a frantic appeal to the Government to send Zebehr Pasha. I am not going to blame the Government for not acceding to the request. But last night the Prime Minister, curiously enough, told the House that he thought General Gordon was right in asking for Zebehr, and that he was disposed to go to any length to meet his request. But what an extraordinary reason the right hon. gentleman gave for not doing what he said was right! He said that he feared he might thereby be placed in a minority in the House.

Mr. GLADSTONE: The noble lord has repeated inaccurately what I said. I did not say that I should have in any case sent Zebehr, but I said whereas the arguments for sending Zebehr might have been very nearly balanced, and in the minds of some might have preponderated, the one argument conclusive against it was not that the Government would have been placed in a minority, but that the sending of Zebehr would have been stopped by a vote of the House.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: That is exactly the same thing. If he had come down to the House and proposed to send Zebehr, and a vote of the House had been taken hostile to that motion, does the Prime Minister think that he could

have retained office? It would have been a vote of censure, so my contention is right. It is in accordance with a former case with reference to the Prime Minister, because I recollect quite well when he informed the House that he did not restore order in Ireland, although he ought to have done so, because he was not certain at that time whether he could retain a majority of the House of Commons.

GORDON'S POSITION.

I myself am glad the Government did not send Zebehr; but, looking at the circumstances of General Gordon's appeal, I wonder that their eyes were not open to the fact that the gallant officer found his position at Khartoum utterly untenable, and that his position was one of imminent peril. On Feb. 22, when the Government refused his request, the movement of troops might have been carried on without the slightest risk and General Gordon's safety been provided for. That is the second undeniable failure of the Government. Let me turn here for a moment to the Suakin expedition. The right hon. gentleman taunted the Opposition that they cheered the announcement of the Suakin expedition. But why did we cheer it? Not because we were in love with the dangers of the expedition, but because it occurred to us that the dangers were far outweighed by the advantages which must obviously result. However, when we found, to our disgust and dismay, that not one single object of the expedition had been attained, we lost no time in condemning it. Let me compare the Government treatment of the question of Suakin with their treatment of General Gordon. Suakin is a dirty, plague-stricken, wretched port on the Red Sea, of no value to any one except the Soudanese. General Gordon is, as has been said, a great personality, and the envoy of the Queen. More than that, his life is invaluable to the country, because nations do not turn out General Gordons by the dozen every day. The Prime Minister worked himself up to a fury with the hon. baronet because he said that the Government ought to have given material support to General Gordon; but why not do for General Gordon what has been done for this wretched, plague-stricken port on the Red Sea so lavishly and uselessly? Comparing the treatment of Suakin and that of Gordon, the logic of facts is absolutely fatal to their position. It occurred

to me last night, when the Prime Minister was speaking, that there was a singularly inexplicable difference in the manner in which different persons appeal to the sympathies of the Prime Minister. I compared his speech in the case of General Gordon with his efforts in the cause of Mr. Bradlaugh, and I remembered the courage, the perseverance, the tenacity, and the amount of time of the House of Commons which were consumed by the Government in their desperate adherence to that man. If a hundredth part of those moral qualities, of that invaluable modicum of time, which the Government bestowed on the cause of that seditious blasphemer, had been given to the support of a Christian hero, the success of General Gordon's mission would have been by this time assured.

A POLITICAL CRITICISM.

This, too, struck me as most remarkable when the Prime Minister sat down, that the finest speech he ever made in the House of Commons was delivered in support of a seditious blasphemer, and the worst——

Sir W. LAWSON: I rise to order. I wish to ask you, Sir, whether a member of this House has a right to call a fellow-member a "seditious blasphemer?"

The SPEAKER: In reply to the hon. baronet, I may say that I do not think the term "seditious blasphemer" applied to a member of this House proper or Parliamentary, and I feel sure the noble lord would wish to withdraw it.

Lord R. CHURCHILL: I withdraw the term. I meant it merely as a political criticism. I was going to say that the finest speech the right hon. gentleman ever delivered in the House of Commons was in the case of this gentleman whom I am prohibited from characterizing, and the worst he ever delivered, by common consent, in the case of the Christian hero. The Prime Minister made a most extraordinary remark last night, which shows the incapacity of the present Government to deal with those difficult commissions abroad. He asked what would be the value of a few hundred British troops at Berber. Now for fifty years of his life the Prime Minister has been more or less conspicuously in the service of the Crown, and has been identified with many brilliant triumphs of the British arms, and after that long experience of British valour he gets up and asks the House, What is the

value of a few hundred British soldiers? Sir, he must have been thinking, not of the earlier military glories with which he was connected, but rather with the calamities of Majuba Hill and Laing's Neck. I think, myself, that the value of a few hundred British soldiers at Berber would have been everything. This march across the desert would have produced a great effect, protected fugitives, confirmed waverers and undoubtedly saved the garrisons of Berber and prevented the imminent danger which now assails Dongola. I assert, most emphatically, that the duty of rescue still lies heavy upon you—to rescue all of the garrisons. It is the duty of England—the sacred duty of England—to support her envoy. The Prime Minister says that in October he will consider the question, but does he really think that England will wait patiently till then to hear what the Government are going to do? If so, I can only remark how low is the estimate the Prime Minister has of his countrymen who have so long worshipped him and put their trust in him. But if the Prime Minister imagines that the British people will wait until the middle of October, does he think the Mahdi will wait till October? Because, whatever may be the qualities of the British people, the Mahdi has developed certain qualities which enable us to calculate the rate of his advance; and does not the right hon. gentleman propose to take any steps to save the inhabitants of Lower Egypt from the encroachments of the Mahdi until the time when, as he says, climatic influences will not endanger the health and life of the troops? I cannot believe that this will be endorsed by the House of Commons, because, to my mind, so very little would be necessary to arrest the Mahdi. A slight movement of troops, a small equipment, a little more energy, a little more precision, a little more common-sense, a little more consistency in your foreign despatches, and the thing would be done.

CONFERENCE.

And now we are told that the Prime Minister is going to meet the Powers of Europe in Conference. He is going to meet them after this debate, if he survives it. He is going to meet the Powers of Europe in Conference on the Eastern question—Powers represented by standing armies numbering millions of men. I like conferences, and I advocate

them on certain conditions. I will illustrate what I mean. Compare the position which Lord Beaconsfield occupied at the Congress at Berlin with the position which the Premier will occupy at the Conference which is about to take place. The one, by the mere movement of the fleet and the movement of troops, arrested the advance of the Russian army at the very gates of the goal to which, for a century, they have been tending. The other will appear as having been afraid—and he has stated his fears in the face of Europe—to arrest the advance of a barbarian, and of rescuing an English envoy. I should like to know whether the Government appear on terms of equality with the other European Powers in such a position as that—a Government that goes into Conference having done a dishonourable act. The Conference called together will not be so much in the nature of a coalition for the consideration of Egyptian affairs, where the Powers will meet on equality. It will be rather a tribunal called together to pronounce on the crimes of a delinquent and recreant nation. The Prime Minister denounced the motion for a vote of censure, and said it was dictated not by love of country, but by a mere desire for office and the transfer of power. I have to ask the Prime Minister now to tell us, by way of satisfying intelligent curiosity, if ever he knew a vote of censure which had not for its object the transfer of power, and why, if that is the general character of votes of censure, this particular vote of censure which the right hon. baronet has proposed is so vile in his eyes? He stated that the Opposition was unjust and ambitious. It is not for me to defend the Opposition from these adjectives, but I should like to know from the right hon. gentleman or any of his colleagues whether, when the Premier commenced in 1877 the agitation which electrified the country, was he not ambitious, was he not unjust? Was he not open to these two adjectives when he publicly boasted—I think it was at Oxford—that for two or three years he had rested neither night nor day in order to thwart and arrest the policy of Lord Beaconsfield? And why should there not be a transfer of power? I have heard and read a great deal of the deplorable weakness of the Opposition. I certainly detected no deplorable weakness in the speech of the right hon. baronet last night. Nor, indeed, did I detect any deplorable weakness in the sonorous and resounding cheers

which greeted that speech from beginning to end—a speech which, in my opinion—and I say it with all deference—was magnificent, and all the more magnificent because it was so measured and so grave. It must, I think, have called to the Prime Minister's mind the palmy days of Tory leadership. What means this transfer of power which the Prime Minister held out as being so mischievous and pernicious? It means, so far as I can make it out, the immediate and certain rescue of General Gordon as opposed to the autumnal and uncertain rescue of General Gordon. It means the restoration of order in Egypt as opposed to a continuance of anarchy. It means the expulsion of the Mahdi as opposed to a general Mohammedan rising.

A PROTECTORATE.

I believe it also means the taking over of Egypt under British protection, extending the might of Britain over that distracted land for a time and only for a time. That is what a transfer of power means in Egypt. What does it mean at home? Taking the different sections of this House, it means—to the Whigs a cessation of voting day after day that black is white—a Parliamentary dietary which even the tough and leathery political stomach of the hon. member for Orkney (Mr. Laing) is unable to digest any longer. What does it mean for the Radical party? It means for them that, after four years' abandonment of every principle on which they came into power, they will at length be able to reconcile their principles with their votes. But we are told that there must not be a transfer of power because the Radical party could not support anything that would delay Parliamentary reform. Well, but what is there to prevent the Radicals taking a just view of the relief of General Gordon? Parliamentary reform is no longer a party question. I cannot go into the whole treatment of the question by the Opposition. Whatever transfer of power takes place the whole question of Parliamentary reform must be dealt with on a more complete, on a more genuine and larger basis. The object of a vote of censure is a transfer of power, and the sooner it comes the better it will be for the country. The Government, when it went to Egypt, abandoned every shred of principle they professed, and

Egypt has been their Nemesis and probably will be their doom. The whole question of Egypt is at last, thank God, presented to us in an intelligible and simple form. It is, "Will you or will you not rescue General Gordon now?" Answer me "Ay" or answer me "No." The people of England, of Scotland, and, I believe, of Ireland say "Ay." The Prime Minister and a few Radical fanatics below the gangway say "No." But great as is the Prime Minister's power, long as has been his career, dazzling and fascinating as is his eloquence, and undoubtedly glorious as is his name, the odds against him on this question are so overwhelming that even the Prime Minister must submit or resign.

THE FRANCHISE BILL.

(HOUSE OF COMMONS, MAY 20, 1884.)

It was not my intention to offer any remarks on this bill, further than I did on the first reading. I thought it was a little bill—I might almost call it a trumpery bill, certainly not in any way worthy to be designated a great Reform Bill. I therefore thought it might be allowed to pass through this House, and go up to the House of Lords, where no doubt it would receive the consideration which it merits. But I regret that this question of Ireland has again been brought before the House. I have given as much anxious thought as I could to the subject, and I will frankly admit that my mind has undergone a change. That change, I venture to think, has risen from a most legitimate source, namely, from the progress of the debate in the House. If it is to be supposed that debates in the House of Commons are, under no circumstances, to produce changes in the minds of hon. members, then I think we may as well adopt the Radical programme, and abolish debates altogether. I, like everybody else, was considerably startled when it was first mooted that the Reform Bill would be brought in for Ireland upon the same basis as for England; and I imagine that even the Government felt great hesitation on the point, and did not arrive at their decision without proper consideration. There

is no doubt that I was, in this respect, in exceedingly good company, because the noble lord the Secretary of State for War himself informed the country that he was startled at the proposal. But as the debates have proceeded I have genuinely come to the conclusion, after balancing all the arguments—and there are many on each side—that on this sole question of Ireland, quite apart from the basis of the bill, to which my objections remain as strong as ever in its present form, the position which the Government have taken up is on the whole wise and statesmanlike. I should be sorry to see any strong party opposition to their proposals in this matter.

IRELAND SHOULD HAVE POLITICAL EQUALITY.

I cannot forget that the state of Ireland has very much altered in the last two years. A remarkable decrease of disorder has taken place, and that appears to be still going on. Moreover, we on this side of the House may recognize with satisfaction the great change that has come over Her Majesty's Government in respect to Ireland. We may feel some confidence that they have learned a lesson from the events of 1881 and 1882, and that they recognize more fully what are the real duties of an English Government towards the Irish people. It may also be said that the land agitation is dying out, and that the farmers are disposed to abandon, at any rate, for a time, those paths of violence with which the House is only too familiar. Under the circumstances it appears to me to be what has been called the "psychological moment" for England to hold out to Ireland the generous hand of fellowship and to sow the seeds of conciliation. I do not know that there is any better seed of conciliation that we can sow than that of complete political equality. What does this Bill propose to do? As regards Ireland, its chief feature is to confer the Parliamentary franchise on the peasantry. On the whole I acknowledge that I do not fear the effect of that enfranchisement. I hold that the treasonable aspirations especially of Fenianism and its analogous societies have their home in the Irish towns, and I do not think that they have taken much root amongst the country population. The incidents of agricultural life are not at all favourable to the revolutionary movements, and the peasantry is much more under the proper and legitimate influence of the Roman Catholic

priesthood than the lower classes in the towns. At any rate, on the subject of these treasonable societies, for a long time past the attitude of the Roman Catholic Church has been one which must be most satisfactory to the Home Government. No one could have set his face more strongly against those movements than the late Cardinal Cullen, and the course which he adopted appears to have been followed by Cardinal M'Cabe. That being so, I believe that a strong influx of the country element will altogether overwhelm and counterbalance the town populations, and will be to an immense extent a guarantee against any danger which we might fairly expect from an extension of the franchise.

THE MUD CABIN ARGUMENT.

I think, too, that the effect of this extension would be favourable to the landlord interest. It is quite clear that in the state of Ireland the interests of the farmers and of the labourers are essentially diverse, and from that diversity will arise a strong class difference which we may look upon as a guarantee of safety to the State at large. We have heard a great deal of the mud cabin argument. That we owe to the brilliant, the ingenious, and the fertile mind of the right hon. gentleman the Member for Westminster (Mr. W. H. Smith). I suppose that to the mind of a lord of suburban villas, or of an owner of pineries and vineries, a mud cabin represents the climax of physical and mental degradation. But the franchise has never been determined by Parliament with respect to the character of dwellings. I should like to say this, that the difference between the mud cabin of an Irish peasant and the cottage of an English labourer is not nearly so great as the difference between the palaces which are the abode of the right hon. member for Westminster and the lowly dwelling which shelters from the storm and tempest the humble individual who now addresses the House. If, on such a distinction as this, the right hon. gentleman were to propose that he should have a vote for parliamentary elections and that I should have none, I feel sure that the House of Commons would repudiate the suggestion with indignation. On these general grounds I dispose of the mud cabin argument. The House will also recollect that the fact of a man living in a mud cabin in Ireland is not the

slightest proof that he is incapable of exercising the franchise. Very often he is a man possessing a small holding, in decently good times he has money in the savings bank, and I should be prepared to contend that intellectually he is often more suited to take an interest in and to form a sound view upon public questions than the English agricultural labourer.

THE PROTESTANT MINORITY.

We are told that the Protestant minority will be overwhelmed. That is a serious argument, and one which, if well founded, ought to be carefully considered. But I do not see why the Protestant minority should be placed in a worse position by this bill than it occupies at the present moment. Outside Ulster what is called the Protestant minority has no political power, except in so far as it is represented in the House of Peers. Generally speaking, the whole of the representation of Ireland, with the exception of Ulster, Dublin University, Dublin County, the borough of Portarlington, and what I may call the happy accident of Leitrim, is in the hands of the Catholic party. After balancing all the arguments for and against the inclusion of Ireland, I have arrived at the conviction that we may with safety agree with the Government in this respect. Honourable gentlemen who belong to the Tory party may recollect that equality of political rights in Ireland and England was a principle recognized at the time of the Union and in the Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867. At those periods the state of Ireland was much more disordered. Under all the circumstances I may appeal to hon. members on this side of the House not to identify themselves as a party with the amendment which my hon. friend has moved. They have constituted themselves the defenders of a great, a far-spreading, and a wide-reaching cause—the preservation of our institutions at home, the promotion of a vigorous policy abroad, and the furtherance of Imperial rule and unity in our colonies and dependencies. If their cause is so great, why should they on a question of detail—yes, comparatively speaking, it is a matter of detail, and unimportant detail—why should they alienate inevitably and irretrievably from that cause immense numbers of the Queen's subjects—subjects both in Ireland and Great Britain, whom by a wiser

policy and happier methods they might allure to their standard and to their ranks? I would appeal to my hon. friend the member for West Surrey (Mr. Broderick), who by his constant display of the highest intelligence and ability has, I think, shown that he belongs to the more generous and advanced school of political thought which has emancipated itself from the traditions of an antiquated party to seek to base the real strength of the Tory party on the genuine and spontaneous affections of the people—I would appeal to him whether he would not now decline to press his amendment to a division. It is, I think, reactionary. It is an amendment which is calculated to throw a slur and a stigma upon a country with which he is closely and honourably connected. It may have the effect of unnecessarily placing the Tory party in pronounced opposition to the legitimate desires of an overwhelming majority of the Irish people. To my mind, it will have the invidious effect of placing many who admire the traditions which my hon. friend defends, and who agree with him on almost all political points, under the painful and disagreeable necessity either of leaving the House or of going into the opposite lobby.

THE LORDS AND THE PEOPLE.

(AT MANCHESTER, AUGUST 8, 1884.)

The Radical party, with Mr. Gladstone at its head, is outraged and indignant with the Tories because we have adopted as our party cry, "Appeal to the people." The Radicals say that anything more monstrous, more unconstitutional, cannot be imagined. Well, I do not think we need trouble ourselves very much about the Radical party, for the very good reason that our policy of appeal to the people is being actively carried out, and by no one more strenuously than by the Liberals themselves. The people are now being appealed to by both parties, and the only difference between the appeal to the people advocated by the Tories and the appeal to the people carried out by the Liberals, is that we, the Tories, desire that the appeal to the people shall be terminated and justified by the votes of the

people ; and the Liberals are determined that the votes of the people are just the very last things in the world which they will tolerate at the present moment.

WHAT MR. JOHN MORLEY SAYS.

"Wait a little," said Mr. John Morley ; "at the proper time we will allow the people to vote. Schnadhorst is not yet quite ready, his preparations are not complete, the tissue of fabrication and falsification which we are weaving has not yet had time to cover the country. Ireland, Egypt, South Africa are too fresh and vivid in the memory of the nation." Mr. John Morley, like Felix, the Roman Governor, when being preached to about judgment to come, feebly and stammeringly exclaims—"Yes ! perhaps ! very likely ! but at a more convenient season." Well, now, I am perfectly certain of this—that the Tory party will get their way, and that the appeal to the people which is now going on will produce, and produce very soon indeed, a general election. If Mr. John Morley and his friends imagine that they can rouse this great popular emotion, that they can go careering about the country summoning the people to attend mass meetings in their thousands, that they can loudly and solemnly call upon the people to judge between them and their opponents, and having done all this, can for any appreciable length of time prevent them going into the polling booth and deciding upon what they have seen and heard, they imagine a vain and foolish conceit. The people are being summoned by both parties to come together and give judgment, and Mr. John Morley and his friends cannot any more avert or delay that decision than the convicted criminal in the dock can delay the sentence of the judge.

THE PARTY OF THE PEOPLE.

Lord Hartington, who was here the other day, asked the men of Lancashire to remember 1832, and to remember 1866. But I declare there is no analogy between those times and the present. Do you think that in 1832 we could have seen things as they are now ? What is the great feature of the changed times which have come over us since 1832, and the changed parties which have accompanied these times ? Why the great feature is the growth of the

Tory party in our large northern cities; an active party, relying confidently and with right and justice upon popular support, who, instead of being afraid of the people, or neglectful of them, seek them out, argue with them, and lay their case and policy before them. Do you think if we had been the party which we were in 1832 we could have gathered together such an enormous meeting—this crushing refutation of Radical slanders? And not only here, but in all our other large towns, the Tory party can hold and will hold similar meetings to this; and the reason of it is, that experience has shown that the Tory party, as at the commencement of the eighteenth century, so at the end of the nineteenth century, is the party of the people—the party which protects popular freedom, which defends and enlarges popular rights, which neither grinds, nor drives, nor tyrannizes over the people, but which seeks ever a fair and full and free expression of the nation's will; and it is because we have truth upon our lips, honesty in our hearts, and patriotism and love of the great empire of the Queen overruling and guiding all our acts, that we are able, without fear and without shame, to meet the men of Lancashire assembled in their thousands to-day.

LIBERAL DISUNION.

I am told that Radical orators go about the country and declaim about Tory disunion. Well, let them, if it amuses them. We know that Tory disunion is a phantom and a fiction, the ridiculous creation of a disordered and dissipated Radical imagination. But what may we not say of disunion in the Liberal camp after the late painful disclosures? Here you see two great Liberal leaders (the Premier and Lord Hartington), declaring that they will be no party to the cry taken up of abolishing the House of Lords, and here you see the swarm of Radical followers crying out that the abolition of the House of Lords is the only thing they care about; that the Franchise Bill is to them a stalking horse, which they cannot be troubled with any longer when the abolition of the House of Lords seems to be within their grasp. The fact is Radicals and Liberals do not know their own minds, they do not know exactly what they want. On this question the great Liberal party is without any definite policy. In 1882 Mr. Gladstone informed

Parliament that his domestic legislation had been a total failure, not because of the Tory party, but because of the defective and rotten procedure of the House of Commons. Well, in 1882, he spent some time in reforming the procedure, and at last he got it quite to his mind; but now, strange to say, he never loses the opportunity of declaring that his reform procedure, *clôture* and all, has been a total failure, and that the whole work will have to be done over again by a new Parliament. Lord Hartington, in this place a fortnight ago, solemnly declared that the domestic legislation of the Government had been a total failure, not because of the House of Lords—he fully acquitted them of all responsibility—but on account of the incompetence of the House of Commons. These were his very words—the incompetence of the House of Commons. That is what we have been saying for four years. It was an incompetent House of Commons that rejected the Manchester Ship Canal, and it is because of the incompetence of the House of Commons that we demand an appeal to the people in order that we may have a new House of Commons. Well, now, gentlemen, this is very remarkable—that for all these total failures which I have described to you Her Majesty's Government never think of blaming themselves. These silly and abandoned individuals calling themselves Ministers imagine that by the production of this measure for the better representation of the people, which, instead of improving the representation of the people would only fatally unrepresent the people, and only improve the representation of the Radical party, they imagine that by this imbecile device they can blind the eyes of their countrymen to the shocking record of legislative, administrative, and executive incapacity which I have placed before you.

THE PATRIOTIC PEERS.

If that is so, if these are the facts which you ought to bear in your minds before deciding under the great appeal to the people which is now going on, does not, I ask you in all confidence, the conduct of the House of Lords in respect to the Reform Bill begin to wear a very different aspect? The assertion that the House of Lords has no confidence in the people is demolished by the records of

the Lords' journals that the House of Lords is in favour of an extension of the franchise. The loud assertion that the House of Lords is afraid of an improved representation is demolished by the courageous efforts of the Peers to make that improved representation immediate and certain rather than distant and doubtful. The assertion that the House of Lords recoils before the voice of the people is demolished by the challenge of the Lords to Mr. Gladstone to let that great voice be heard at the polling booths. Those assertions are false from beginning to end, and to refute them I will make one assertion which shall be as true as they are false. There is a set of persons, in whom the House of Lords has no confidence. These persons are not the people of England, they are the Ministers of the Crown, and I believe that the want of confidence in Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues and in his policy expressed and acted on by the House of Lords has placed the Upper Chamber in more entire harmony with their fellow-countrymen than they have ever been at any period of their existence. I will admit that it is quite true that I, a feeble, humble member of the Tory party, knowing, as I know, the inveterate, the innate capacity of the Liberal party for the falsification of political truth—it is quite true that for a moment I felt anxious for the result of the conflict which the courage of the House of Lords has provoked. But seeing what I have seen to-day, and hearing what I have heard elsewhere, I now feel confident and sure that the British nation, having to decide between the House of Lords and its long centuries of great tradition on the one hand, and the faults and the follies and the failures of Mr. Gladstone's four years' government on the other, which they will abolish and which they will preserve, will, by their wisdom, by their knowledge, and by higher than earthly guidance, award the palm and the honour and the victory to those who, conscious of the immeasurable responsibilities attaching to an hereditary House, have dauntlessly defended against an arbitrary Minister the ancient liberties of our race.

THE REFORM BILL.

(AT CARLISLE, OCTOBER 8, 1884.)

To-night I will, with your permission, address myself to the great question of the extension of the franchise. At any rate, I will commence by making one remark in which even my opponents will agree with me, and, that is, that Saturday last was a most remarkable day : indeed, I may say a great day for England, because on that day was demonstrated in an effectual manner the healthy and the vigorous interest which our people take in their political progress and condition. I suppose I shall not be accused of exaggeration when I say that about a quarter of a million of people, of one kind and another, of all classes, on that day gathered together in various parts of the country to consider political questions ; and even if we want to be perfectly fair, and divide those numbers equally between the Conservatives and the Liberals, I still maintain there was a great superiority in the Conservative meetings on account of the wider range of view which they took. At the Conservative meetings the position of our country at home or abroad was discussed and considered. At the Liberal meetings they merely confined their consideration to the position of Her Majesty's Government on one small question connected with the Franchise Bill, which Lord Hartington now assures us is only a question of procedure. The chief meetings of Saturday last were those which were held at Leeds and at Rawtenstall, in North-east Lancashire. Well, at Leeds the House of Lords was denounced, defied, and threatened with summary abolition. But I do not think, for once in a way, that we need pay any very great attention to the speeches which were made at Leeds on Saturday, because at the very moment that those speeches were being made Lord Hartington was engaged in the performance which I believe is known in even the highest circles of this land as "chucking up the sponge." I am very much afraid that the *Times* will be vexed and annoyed with me for using such an expression as that, because the *Times* is a great purist and very prudish about the English language, and objects to what it calls homely vernacular. But I regret to say that, with limited

knowledge of the English vocabulary, I know no other expression which so accurately describes Lord Hartington's speech. Lord Hartington's speech, which I read with the greatest possible attention, was the most complete and ample justification of the action of the House of Lords which the most ardent Tory could desire or even dream of. I think I can explain to you this somewhat abrupt surrender by the Liberal party of their untenable position. The Liberal party has discovered that the House of Lords were not the least alarmed by any of the antics or pranks they played; they discovered that the House of Lords meant to stand perfectly firm, and they knew that if the House stood firm nothing could prevent an almost immediate dissolution, and they shrewdly calculated the results of that dissolution, and they also knew that if they surrendered and came down from their untenable position and brought in their Redistribution Bill, they would secure to themselves at the least one more year's tenure of office, and the Liberals, who are nothing if they are not worldly wise, came to the conclusion that a bird in the hand was worth two in the bush, and that anything was preferable to immediately going to the constituencies; and therefore Lord Hartington was sent down into Lancashire to pronounce the word surrender, and certainly we can say, "All's well that ends well."

FORECAST.

I imagine that the course of events which is to come will be something of this kind:—The Franchise Bill will be reintroduced when Parliament meets and sent up to the House of Lords. A Redistribution Bill will be introduced, and if it is found to be a fair measure, as Lord Hartington says, founded on fair principles, securing fair representation to all, whether in town or country, that Bill will be passed and sent up to the House of Lords, and the entire question of Parliamentary reform—the whole Reform Bill, whether in one or whether in two parts, will receive the Royal Assent some time next year. In that case, gentlemen, you will have a dissolution of Parliament in the autumn or early in the following winter of 1885—as soon, in fact, as the registration arrangements can be completed. But if, on the other hand, the redistribution scheme of the Government is obviously unfair; if it is obviously unsound; if it is merely what Lord Hartington

seems to suggest, in adherence to the lines of 1832 ; if it is merely a piece of party patchwork, I anticipate the House of Lords will reject the Franchise Bill, and then nothing in the world can save the Government from immediate dissolution. In either case, I think the Conservative party may take heart and cheer up, whether the election takes place in January before the old constituencies complicated by this question of reform, or whether it takes place in the autumn or winter of 1885, before the enlarged and redistributed electorate. Surely, gentlemen, I say, the nation will turn from men such as these ; from these clouds without water, blown about by the wind ; these wandering stars—surely they will turn to the united and historic party who have in the past and so in the future can only alone re-establish your social and imperial interests, and can alone proceed safely, steadily, and surely along the broad path of social progress and reform.

LORDS AND COMMONS.

(AT BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 13, 1884.)

The toast of the Constitution is, as far as I know, a novel one at Tory banquets in this particular form, but at the same time I am disposed to consider that at this moment it is a very appropriate toast, because it would be idle to deny, and foolish to blind our eyes to the fact, that our Constitution is in danger. I observed, gentlemen, the other day a report of the proceedings of the Trades Union Congress at Aberdeen, and I noticed that the Trades Union Congress at Aberdeen passed unanimously a resolution that the hereditary principle was to be abolished from our Constitution. In other words, that is proclaiming the downfall of the ancient Monarchy of England. I think we may with some justice question the authority of that Congress to come to such a decision, because, when the great reform demonstration took place in London at the close of the summer, I was one of the spectators of a spectacle which was undoubtedly in its way impressive. There was a long line of banners floating down Pall-mall, and the most conspicuous

and the best adorned of those banners was one which bore in letters of gold this inscription :—" Politics are the ruin of trades unions." I think, gentlemen, that the constituents of those delegates who met together at Aberdeen, and who proclaimed the downfall of the Monarchy of England, will be entitled—and it will be their bounden duty—to call the delegates to account for the strong politics to which they then and there bound themselves. Gentlemen, undoubtedly the two most leading and most active features of our Constitution at the present day are the House of Commons and the House of Lords. The proposal is that the House of Commons should be reformed, and that the House of Lords should be abolished. About the reform of the House of Commons there is absolutely no difference of opinion. Everybody agrees that it is a worthless and a useless House of Commons, and that any reform which takes place in it cannot possibly be a reform for the worse. But about the abolition of the House of Lords, I think there is likely to arise a little difference of opinion. We are told on the highest authority that the House of Lords must be abolished on account of its many defects, and Mr. Gladstone says that the principal defect of the House of Lords is that it is an irresponsible body. I take leave to state my conviction that the House of Lords is a far more responsible body than ever the House of Commons or the Government of England. It is quite true that the House of Commons, if it displeases popular opinion, may not be re-elected, but, after all, that is a very transient penalty, and members who are rejected by their constituencies one day very often return to the House of Commons the next day, and if that is the limit of the responsibility of the House of Commons, I think the responsibility of the House of Commons is very slender and a very worthless article. Then Mr. Gladstone says that the responsibility of a Government is very great because a Government can be impeached. Well, my opinion is that a Liberal Government cannot be impeached, at any rate in this world. On what may happen to them hereafter I decline altogether to speculate ; but having often heard the responsibilities of the Government brought before the House of Commons in order to induce that House to take a certain course, I can most truly declare, from my own experience, that the responsibility of a British Government

is a perfect fiction and a perfect phantom. But whenever the House of Lords takes any very decided action, any very strong action on some matter on which popular opinion is greatly interested in one way or another, the question is immediately raised of the constitution and the continued existence of the House of Lords. That is no slight issue ; it is no transient penalty which is involved if the House of Lords should be condemned or should be found to be in the wrong by the people of England. On the contrary, the abolition of the House of Lords, if it was once decreed by the people of England, would be perpetual and eternal, and you would no more be able to replace the House of Lords than you could replace the ancient Senate of Rome or the dead and bygone Diet of Frankfort.

“THE ONLY GUARANTEE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF
BRITISH LIBERTY.

Do you think that the House of Lords, that the members of that House, are not aware of the responsibility under which they act? Do you not think that they are proud of the position which they hold, of the rights which they claim, and of the duties which they have to discharge? Do you think that they do not know that they are bound by all the honour which can attach to ancient names to hand down to their descendants that position, those rights, and those duties untarnished, undiminished, and unshorn? And they know that if they would enjoy that position, if they would still continue to claim those rights, still continue to discharge those duties, they must ever act in such a manner that the freedom and the liberties of the English people shall suffer no detriment at their hands, and that in case the freedom of Englishmen, which is our proudest birthright, was by their action in any way injured, that position, those rights, and those duties would vanish for ever. The members of the House of Lords are continually impressed with that idea, and as they faithfully and courageously and honestly accepted that idea, so I claim before this meeting that they have equally faithfully and equally loyally discharged their duties to the people of England. We pledge ourselves, gentlemen, to-night—in drinking this toast, we pledge ourselves solemnly to the

defence of the House of Lords, as the only guarantee for the preservation of British liberty, and we pledge ourselves to the defence of the House of Lords as representing the Tory party in Birmingham, and in sympathy with the Tory party throughout the length and breadth of England; and we pledge ourselves that we will cease from no labour and no toil, we will shrink from no issue, and we will recoil from no danger in fighting out this contest, which the Government have deliberately provoked, to its bitter and its bitterest end.

RUSSIA AND INDIA.

(AT THE PRIMROSE LEAGUE BANQUET,
APRIL 19, 1885.)

I have often been asked the question, "What is the Primrose League?" Radicals have ask me the question with that derision which conceals anxiety. Conservatives have asked me the question with the hope that I might be able to inform them that it will be a powerful adjunct to our party forces. My lords and gentlemen, the Primrose League—to give it the best definition which occurs to me—is a transformation into political energy of the emotions which were aroused by Lord Beaconsfield's death and the sentiments which are excited by the knowledge of his career. Those emotions and those sentiments were displayed with extraordinary force by the spontaneous determination of great numbers of people to commemorate the anniversary of the 19th of April by the wearing of the primrose. I said spontaneous, because it was truly spontaneous. It was not the work of any political organization. It was not suggested by any leading statesman or any powerful newspaper. It was not confined to the wealthy and the great; on the contrary, it was essentially among the masses of the people that the phenomenon was shown. It was, as it were, a mysterious, magnetic thrill, which caused thousands of English hearts to resolve that on every recurring 19th of April they would display to the world their knowledge of a great man's life and their faith in the excellence of his Parliamentary and Ministerial deeds. Three anniversaries were thus commemorated

by increasing numbers and with increasing enthusiasm and zeal, including those whose attention, I may say, is concentrated on political controversy, and whose days, and even nights, are occupied in resisting the Radical host with a popular sentiment which time had shown to be genuine and durable, and to be utilized in a practical form and transformed into a living political force. There was, as you are no doubt aware, much of poetry and romance in the best sense of the word attaching to Lord Beaconsfield's career. It was essentially a career of genius and imagination inspired by a profound study of the past. It was a career of resistless triumph over obstacles to ordinary mortals insuperable, as was the triumph of a mediæval knight. It was determined, and I think wisely determined, that those characteristics should be as far as possible set forth in the title of the members and in the ordinances and procedure of the league. I do not myself think that that determination would have been in any way displeasing to the illustrious hero whose career we are commemorating this evening, because he has laid down in those celebrated Runnymede Letters, when describing all the qualities which go to make up a great nation, that the spirit of chivalry is indispensable. Well, when this association was first founded and its character made public, there were those who laughed, not only among our opponents, but also among our friends. But, gentlemen, those laugh best who laugh last, and for my part I have every hope that when the result of the coming election is made known the knights of the Primrose League will be laughing cheerily and their hearts will be beating proudly in the consciousness of good work done. There is no better test of the merits of an institution or of an individual than the capacity to endure ridicule, and tried by this severe test the Primrose League has shown itself to be real. From the day, less than two years ago—from the day when some half-dozen or more gentlemen met together in the Carlton and founded the league, to the present day when its members may be numbered by thousands, in spite of every kind of ridicule and criticism, it has grown, and grown, and grown. It has flowed all over the country into town and hamlet alike, winning its way among all classes, and gathering into the net of the in-

stitution hundreds of able and zealous workers whom ordinary political organizations might never have touched. In every constituency in this country where there is a habitation of the Primrose League the Conservative candidate will have at his command a band of workers, a *corps d'élite*, volunteers and not mercenaries, representing and drawn from all classes of the community, united by the most perfect equality, and pledged by honour and by the principles of their political faith to sacrifice their time and devote all their energy, experience, and influence to placing him at the head of the poll. My lords and gentlemen, for my part I prefer the Primrose League to the caucus, and I will back the Primrose League against the caucus. I believe that the reason for the extraordinary development and growing power of the organization which we are celebrating this evening is that its objects and its aims are high. The maintenance of an ancient monarchy, the consolidation of an unequalled empire, the preservation of national morality by the connection of the State with a pure religion, the vigilant guardianship of popular rights already secured, the timely extension of those rights as the diffusion of knowledge and the progress of society may demand, the vigorous and earnest promotion of every social reform which can in any degree raise the character and condition of the English people—these are the objects of the Primrose League. They were the objects of Lord Beaconsfield's existence, and they will be prosecuted by us in his memory and in his name, though his presence be among us no more.

MINISTERIAL SHORTCOMINGS.

I do not think there was ever a time in our history when such an organization was more needed. The great defeat of our party in 1880 was, on the whole, I firmly believe, a necessary experience for the nation, and I do not regret it. It not only purged the Tory party of much that was rotten and much that was hopelessly antiquated, but it has enabled the common sense of England to detect in a practical manner and by experience, which, though bitter, will not be forgotten, the worthlessness of Liberal promises and the danger of the Liberal policy. Where is your reduced taxation? Where is your revived trade? Where is your harvest of beneficial legislation?

Where are your diminished foreign liabilities? Where is your reign of universal peace? Where, ah! where indeed? During five and more weary years the nation has anxiously awaited these blessings at the hands of Mr. Gladstone, and though he and all his followers boldly and boastfully declared their power of bestowing them, none of these things have been done. On the contrary, all those advantages which a nation rightly looks for from its Government are more remote than ever, and not only are they remote owing to the policy of the Liberal Government, but that very policy has placed it out of the power of any Government coming into office now immediately or easily to attain them. I do not hesitate to assert that the Tory party will make to the country no such promises as those which deluded the Mid Lothian electors, and which are the indelible disgrace of the Mid Lothian campaign. Reduced taxation cannot possibly be obtained immediately when, owing to a short-sighted and stupid policy, a great part of Africa is on your hands, when for the same reason, short-sightedness and stupidity, you are on the verge of a war with Russia, when for the same reasons your relations with all the European Powers are strained and unfriendly, and when for all these reasons it is a matter of life and death to us to enlarge and maintain on a sadly extended scale our naval and military armaments. Well, gentlemen, neither with such a state of things as this can you reasonably expect revived trade. A revived and flourishing commerce is inseparable from assured and general peace; but experience has shown us that with the present Government in office all hopes of peace are as idle dreams. From the day in May, 1880, when Mr. Gladstone became Prime Minister, up to the present day, there has not been one interval of six months during which England has not been breaking the peace and waging war in some or other quarter of the world. It is no exaggeration to say that the series of wars which Mr. Gladstone has waged during a tenure of office extending over nearly six years has cost the country, by death, by sickness, by wear and tear, and by general expenditure, some thousands of British soldiers and sailors and many millions of British gold. I do not believe that any nation or any empire can possibly endure this constant drain, this incessant dissipation of vital

forces. Is it not, I ask you—is it not ghastly mockery, is it not infatuated imbecility, is it not drivelling idiotcy, that can permit Mr. Childers, the cheerful Chancellor, to come down year after year and prate to the House of Commons about the progress which, by means of his miraculous finance, he has effected in the reduction of the National Debt when your country, owing to himself and his colleagues, is being literally bled to death at every artery and every vein.

INDIA.

I will not pursue these topics any further, though I would be sorely tempted to do so for a reason which I will give you in a minute, and which I think you will consider a sound one. They are topics which have been forced on the minds of the people by Tory speakers in all parts of the country with every variety of argument and rhetoric. The good seed has been sown on receptive soil, and the harvest will be reaped when Parliament is dissolved. We are met here, my lords and gentlemen, this evening, at a great crisis in our national history, and, curiously enough, the place of our meeting is either celebrated or infamous, as you please, as being the very place where, some seven years ago, the Liberal party raised the wild cry of "perish India," at a great representative gathering, and the crisis which is now agitating our minds arises out of the interests of our Indian Empire. I think you will agree with me that it is our duty, not only as Englishmen, but especially as members of this society, at any moment of national emergency, to ask ourselves what would have been the attitude of Lord Beaconsfield, and what advice he would have given us if he had seen this day. I believe that he would have told you (I judge only from my knowledge of his own political career)—I believe he would have told you that it was your duty to sustain and stimulate the patriotism and the courage of the people, and to postpone to a more convenient season the energetic, or perhaps I should rather say, the acrimonious prosecution of party controversy. I would not willingly say one word, and I do not believe there is anybody in this hall who would willingly say one word, which, however indirectly, could injure the chances of the preservation of peace or precipitate the chances of war ; but there is a word

which I think must be said, for there are certain organs in this country and groups of politicians, well meaning, I have no doubt, but very eccentric, who are putting forward certain views and considerations which, if not strenuously answered and refuted, might dangerously mislead the public. My lords and gentlemen, your task of governing India, which you have been carrying on now for more than a hundred years is a task of great difficulty and danger, the difficulties and dangers of which do not diminish as time goes on. Your rule in India is, as it were, a sheet of oil spread out over the surface of, and keeping calm and quiet and unruffled by storms, an immense and profound ocean of humanity; and it is your task, your most difficult business to give peace, individual security, and general prosperity to the 250 millions of people who are affected by those powerful forces, to bind them and to weld them by the influence of your knowledge, your law, and your higher civilization in process of time into one great, united people, and to offer to all the nations of the West the advantages of tranquillity and progress in the East. That is your task for India. That is your *raison d'être* in India. That is your title to India. And I say that a task so difficult, so enormous, and yet so beneficent ought to command the sympathy and friendly assent of every European Power. For undoubtedly it is in their interest as well as in yours that the task should be successfully accomplished.

RUSSIA.

Well, to a great extent that sympathy and friendly assent has been secured; but there is one European Power—the Russian Empire—which for many years has been making the progress of stable government in India not only difficult but almost impossible. That sometimes stealthy, sometimes open, always gradual, always sure advance of the countless hosts of Russia upon the North-west Frontier of India, now resembling the gliding of a serpent, and at another time resembling the bounding of a tiger, hopelessly prevents and prohibits your government in India from acquiring any real stability or striking its roots deep among the native peoples. The eyes of the natives are continually directed toward the North-west. The political discussions of the natives—and they

have many political discussions now-a-days—always turn upon the Russian advance. Every political project or view which they are inclined to take up and put forward is always coloured and qualified by the Russian advance. They know that from that quarter has come every conquest of India but one; they see in that quarter mighty armies moving, and I tell you, gentlemen, that unless that most insidious and malignant movement of Russian armies is permanently arrested it is foolish and futile to hope for any real political or social progress in India under British rule. It is idle and hopeless to be putting forward schemes for securing the loyal and hearty co-operation of the natives in your Indian polity—schemes for local self-government, schemes for equalizing and lightening the financial burdens which weigh heavily on the people, so that you may convince them of the benefit of your rule, schemes for the development of the great resources of India by public works—all these schemes are doomed to be blighted and disappointed and rendered incapable of fruition as long as these most mischievous military movements are agitating the native mind. That is the question between England and Russia. We have been very patient, we have been apparently very unobservant, very long-suffering, and very phlegmatic; but the question has now come before us in a very acute form, and its solution cannot be avoided or escaped. It is not, in my mind, a question of Penjdeh or Herat, or any other quarter of the world, on which certain people are fixing now a ludicrously microscopic amount of attention. That is not the question. The question is this—Will you permit or will you once for all put a stop to, and finally suppress the constant and carefully prepared series of irritations, menaces, and alarms which as long as it continues cripples and paralyzes all your efforts to direct definitely the destinies of Hindostan?

LOYAL NATIVES.

You hear a great deal and we read a great deal now about the loyalty of the people and princes of India. Yes, I believe they are loyal to you now; indeed, if they were not so we should probably not be there; but we must not imagine that the loyalty of an Indian prince or people is of the same quality as our own loyalty towards the British Crown. Their loyalty is strictly conditional, and

rightly so ; you have pledged yourselves to protect them, not only from internal conflict, but from foreign aggression, and you have deprived them of all means of effectually defending themselves. So long as your ability and desire faithfully to fulfill your pledges is obvious and indubitable so long will the loyalty of India last ; but the moment that the marvellously acute perception of the Oriental mind even so much as suspects that you are doubtful of your power and your right, and that you hesitate to assert that power and those rights, no matter at what risk and cost, that loyalty, gentlemen, becomes a thing of the past never to be revived. Therefore, this is the situation. If the result of the present dispute with Russia should demonstrate any failure on our part to determine once for all the hostile designs of that empire, I do not say that you will lose India to-morrow ; but of this I am as certain as that I am standing here—that your rule in India will have received a mortal blow ; that all hopes of political and social progress there will have for ever vanished ; that the deadly decrepitude which fell upon the old Indian and Mogul empires will fall upon you and your empire ; and that the annihilation of your power will be but a question of time.

THE AFGHAN FRONTIER.

(AT PADDINGTON, MAY 6, 1885.)

It may be possible that you know that I was one of those who advocated very strongly and did all I could to attain that in the redistribution of seats representation should be based solely upon population, and one of my chief reasons for urging that line of action was that I wished the metropolis of London to attain its full complement of representatives in Parliament. I did not stop to consider whether those representatives would be Conservative or would be Liberal ; but this I knew—that those representatives would be men of a higher class capable of adequately representing this great city in the councils of the nation, and by high class I do not mean at all men only of wealth and rank, but men

of all classes of society, who are serious, earnest, and intelligent politicians acquainted with the history of their country and able to put before the Parliament of England wise and sound views regarding national policy. I knew that those would be the representatives which London would send to Parliament, and I thought we could not have too many of them, and I am quite confirmed in the views which I took at that time, although I am sorry to say I did not get my way altogether as regards the full complement of members for the metropolis; but I am quite confirmed in the views which I took at that time of the character of the members who would be selected, not only by having studied generally the names and careers of the various candidates for the various metropolitan constituencies, but principally and chiefly by the admirable address which I have listened to from Mr. Cohen this evening. I imagine, gentlemen, that in the new Parliament, particularly if the Tory party is in power, one of the great questions which will be dealt with will be the question of national finance. I hope that the policy of the Tory party, if they come into power, will be a policy of financial reform—a thorough investigation by Parliament and a thorough re-acquirement by Parliament of control over the public departments of this country which control and disburse expenditure. Well, if that is so, who could you have better in Parliament to represent your views and to assist in that policy than Mr. Lionel Cohen, whose experience not only of national finance, which is very great, and of the finances of foreign countries, but whose experience also of the detailed financial management of large societies is perhaps unequalled in London. I imagine that in the new Parliament, if the Tory party possessed a majority, one of the measures to which they would give the greatest possible attention would be a measure to carry into practical effect the recommendation of the Royal Commission which has been sitting to investigate the condition of the dwellings of our artisan classes. That was a subject which was initiated by Lord Salisbury, which, but for him, might have remained for a long time neglected; and I want to know who would render greater assistance to a policy for carrying into effect the recommendations of that Commission than Mr. Cohen, whose experience of the dwellings of the poor in this great

metropolis is, I imagine, unrivalled. Well, gentlemen, as for political knowledge, I am perfectly certain there are few people in this room who know more about the politics of their country than Mr. Cohen. He is gloriously identified with the first great contest which brought the City of London over from the Liberal to the Tory party; he has been for some years chairman of one of the principal Conservative associations of this great borough, and that experience which he must have acquired in all the many electoral contests in which he has been engaged has given him a thorough and firm grasp of the political issues now before you.

NEGOTIATIONS WITH RUSSIA.

I said it was a source of gratification to me to attend this meeting to-night, and so it was, for the meeting is held in support of my friend Mr. Cohen; but on all other grounds I may say that, although, since the year 1880, I have attended a good many public meetings in the country, I do not think I ever came to one before with so heavy a heart. The circumstances of our country are, to my mind, at the present moment so dark and so gloomy that I really hardly know what one may say, and I hardly know where to begin to say what I would like to say. I thought when first I was invited to attend this meeting that I might have been able to have asked your indulgence while I spoke to you on many domestic subjects of interest; but I cannot talk of ordinary domestic questions now, or on ordinary controversial politics, for the good reason that they are not in my mind. The only thing that is now in my mind, and which from its colossal magnitude utterly dwarfs and casts into the shade all other questions, no matter how great their interest may have been before—the one great question which I cannot put out of mind and on which I only seem to be able to talk at the present moment—is the great question, the dispute, the crisis which has arisen between Great Britain and Russia, and the interests of our Indian Empire. Gentlemen, the Parliament and the country are placed at the present moment in a position of prodigious difficulty. If we speak out, say what we think, what we believe, and what we know; well, then we are at once accused of endeavouring to provoke war. I

said what I thought the other night in the House of Commons, and the Home Secretary at once, instantly, without loss of time, and without the smallest charitable consideration, accused me before the House of Commons of endeavouring to provoke a great international war, and to disturb the peace of Europe. Well, on the other hand, if we keep silent, if we refrain from saying that which is in our hearts, then we assume a fearful responsibility. The news of terrible events, I call them terrible events, comes so quickly upon us, they follow each other in such rapid succession, every day brings some fresh announcement of some new national humiliation, some new surrender, that one hardly knows what line of action to advise. No sooner is a line of action decided upon than a new announcement of a new surrender comes, and the line of conduct decided upon becomes inadequate to the occasion.

THE KOMAROFF INCIDENT.

Now let me point out to you a little the series of events which have marked this Russian crisis. One day, not very long ago, you heard that a demand had been made by the Government of the Queen of a rather peremptory nature to the Government of Russia to withdraw the Russian troops from certain positions in Central Asia. On the next day you heard that that demand had been promptly refused. On the next day you heard that the refusal had been meekly accepted. Then shortly afterwards we heard that an agreement with Mr. Gladstone, in the House of Commons called a sacred covenant, had been arrived at between the Government of the Emperor of Russia and the Government of the Queen that the troops of the Czar and the troops of the Afghan Ameer should not advance from their respective positions. Then the next day we heard that the Russian troops had broken the agreement, had advanced, had attacked the troops of the Ameer of Afghanistan, chased them from their position, slaughtered them, routed them, and occupied their territory. Well, then we were told by the Prime Minister and we were told by the Viceroy of India that this was an act of unprovoked aggression, and that reparation had been demanded from the Russian Government by the Ministers of the Crown. Well, next day you hear that the reparation has been promptly refused, and

that that refusal has been meekly accepted, and that the whole affair of what is known as the Komaroff incident has put away on the shelf under the ridiculous sham and pretext of arbitration by the Sovereign of a friendly State. One day we heard that this very difficult and critical question of the frontier of Afghanistan was to be settled on the spot in Central Asia by Commissioners of either Power, and the other day, only yesterday, we heard that the question of the Afghan frontier was to be settled in London, and the Home Secretary the other night in the House of Commons was extremely derisive and angry at the same time with me, because I gave him to understand that I thought that arrangement as to the settlement of the frontier in London was a very bad arrangement for us and a very good one for Russia.

“THOSE IMBECILES AT THE FOREIGN OFFICE.”

I will tell you why it is a very bad arrangement for us and a very good one for Russia. If you settle the frontier of Afghanistan on the spot—assuming that the frontier question is of the importance which some people think—in the first place you may depend upon it that the Russian commander and his staff would find the British commander and the British officers who form his staff far less pliable and far less easy to deal with than those imbeciles who control the Foreign Office in London. Again, there is another advantage in settling the frontier on the spot—namely, that both parties would have the benefit of local knowledge, local history, and local tradition; and, at any rate, the inhabitants, the tribes of those regions who saw these two Commissions among them tracing out the different boundaries, would have some confidence that their rights would be considered and maintained. But there was another most important question with reference to the settlement of the frontier of Afghanistan on the spot which has been very much overlooked, that the British Commissioner, Sir Peter Lumsden, would have had a representative of the Ameer with him, and that representative of the Ameer would have had a very large voice—as he ought to have had—in the settlement of the frontier. But where will be the representative of the Ameer in London? Our unfortunate ally, whom we have done so much to conciliate,

whom we placed upon the throne, whom we have fed with lakhs of rupees and stuffed with Martini-Henrys, in order, if possible, to make him our friend—this unfortunate man is going to have his frontier delimited in Downing Street, some 6,000 or 7,000 miles from Cabul, and his territory will probably be signed away before he has had an opportunity of putting in a word upon the subject. The Russians have gained an enormous advantage in that matter. They have always objected to settle the frontier of Afghanistan on the spot. They refused at first to agree to the despatch of the Commissioners, then they said they would send Commissioners, but they failed to carry out their agreement. Then our Government tried—I believe honestly tried—for a time to be firm, but the effort was too much for them. They have been so long unaccustomed to anything resembling firmness that they could not even make a decent pretence at it. And the moment they heard that the Russian army had advanced, and that the troops of the Afghans had been routed, and that certain positions had been occupied, they promptly gave way and informed the Russians that they had now no objection to settle the frontier of Afghanistan in London.

SAYERS AND HEENAN.

The struggle between England and Russia at the present moment is rather analogous to a celebrated struggle which took place some years ago, and which I can just remember, between two individuals in this country—the great fight between Heenan and Sayers. On the one hand you have a great overgrown Power, a very flabby all-over-the-place Power, presenting many parts in which can be dealt a vital blow, but at the same time able, if it once gets a good fling at you, to give you a most tremendous blow. On the other hand you have a champion, like England, more collected, muscular, self-contained, inexhaustible in pluck and resources; and this struggle is going on, and for your ring all around outside the ropes you have the countless populations of Asia; but I greatly fear—as we have had so very much the worst of the first three or four rounds—I greatly fear that our champion has been nobbled, and I do not know whether it may not be too late even now to try and provide him with more faithful,

more watchful, and more experienced backers. Now, this matter with regard to the delimitation of the Afghan frontier has been a very bad round for us, because of all the insults which we have had to put up with—and insult is the only word—that from the Government of Russia was the greatest, their failure after their deliberate promise to send a Commissioner to meet our Commissioner on the frontier of Afghanistan. Now, that insult was apparent to the whole population of the East. For six months nearly Sir Peter Lumsden, his staff and camp, have been wandering about from pillar to post, exposed to every kind of privation, to much humiliation, and to no little danger; while all the while the Russian Commissioner, whom he went to meet, has been, by the orders of his Government, kept comfortably in the town of Tiflis, laughing, no doubt, in his sleeve, or laughing openly, in common with all his countrymen, at the ridiculous figure presented by the great nation with whom his great master pretended to be on friendly terms. I hold that, whatever other things might have been conceded to Russia, that ought not to have been conceded; we ought to have insisted that the Russian Commissioner should at once proceed to the frontier of Afghanistan to meet the English Commissioner, if only as some slight reparation to our honour and to our name, which before the whole of the East have been wantonly insulted. But I fear the Government care as little for the reputation of the honour of England as they care for the reparation of the unfortunate Ameer of Afghanistan and the families of his poor soldiers who have been so ruthlessly slaughtered.

RECALL OF COMMISSIONERS.

Yesterday there was announced, if possible, a still heavier blow by the recall of Sir Peter Lumsden. I do not think it is possible for anybody here to estimate the fearful significance of that step in the eyes of the Eastern people. The Russians have now, by hook or by crook, got rid of four of your most experienced and able officers in that part of the world. We were told the other day that Mr. Condie Stephen, who is attached to Sir Peter Lumsden's staff, and who is particularly the *bête noir* of the Russians, was coming home with a few

maps for the information of Lord Granville. That was one out of the way. Then we were told yesterday that Sir Peter Lumsden and Colonel Stewart, his second in command, were to repair to the metropolis, not for the purpose of advising with the Government—as the Prime Minister said, her Majesty's Government were not going to wait for their advice; they were going to settle the question before they arrived—but undoubtedly for this reason, and for this reason only, because the presence of Sir Peter Lumsden and Colonel Stewart in that quarter of the world was a source of intense displeasure and annoyance to Russia, and the annoyance and displeasure of Russia your wretched Government dare not face. The presence of these men, particularly of Sir Peter Lumsden and Mr. Condie Stephen, has been perfectly unendurable to the Russians from the beginning, because, in the first place, they kept the most faithful and intelligent watch on the movements of the Russian Government, and in the second by their presence and advice they encouraged the tribes in that part of the world to be prepared to maintain their rights against Russian aggression. Mr. Gladstone says the recall of Sir Peter Lumsden is not the proper description. It is very difficult to say what is a proper description of any act of Mr. Gladstone. He, as you know very well, went to war with the Government of Egypt and bombarded Alexandria and slew many thousands of Egyptian troops, but he declared that he had not been engaged in war: he had only been carrying on military operations. The other day—on Monday night—in the House of Commons, we asserted that he had already spent the whole of the Vote of Credit. Mr. Gladstone replied that he had done nothing of the kind, that he had not spent any of the Vote of Credit; he had only given orders, which would absorb the whole of the Vote of Credit. That is to say, that if one of us goes and orders goods to the amount of a thousand pounds, we should be prepared to come and say here, on this platform, that we have not spent a thousand pounds. Well, one thing I know is this, that we may go on arguing and even joking about Mr. Gladstone's singular phraseology, but that is language which the people of India do not understand. All the people of India know is this, that there were certain persons, representatives of the Queen, on

the frontier of India, in the north-west, and to the presence of these persons the Russian Government has persistently objected ; and at last, in deference to the Russian Government, these persons representing the Queen of England and the Empress of India have gone away. That is all the people of India know, and the Afghans in Herat, and in the neighbourhood of Herat, poor people, they take a curious view of the matter, because they received the representatives of the Queen with the greatest enthusiasm and acclamation. They put their whole trust in them. They made sure that they were now to be protected effectually against Russian aggression. They have compromised their safety, their property, and the honour of their families by showing friendship and placing themselves in alliance with the Commissioner of the Queen : and now, when the Russian army is within fifty miles of these unfortunate people, by the orders of Mr. Gladstone the Commissioner of the Queen leaves them in the lurch.

THIS THING CANNOT GO ON.

I can only say this, that this kind of thing cannot go on. We cannot afford it. Concessions to Russia which were really of comparatively small importance when Russia was a thousand miles away from India, as she was in the year 1865—concessions which were of small importance then are now absolutely vital with Russia at your gates. All India can now hear the beat of the Russian drums and the tramp of the Russian army. All India, looking to you at home to see what steps your Government will take, what corresponding action they are prepared to resort to, only knows this, that your ally the Ameer of Afghanistan has refused permission to British troops to enter his territory ; and India only sees this, that the Commissioner of England has ignominiously taken to his heels before the advancing Russian army. They may be wrong in India, but that is not our business ; that will be their view, and I will venture to say that that is their view at the present moment. Just before I came to this meeting I received a letter from a very high personage in India, in which he described to me the extraordinary outburst of loyalty from Indian princes and people, of which you have seen some accounts in the papers lately. He said it had been

something unparalleled, and that even those in India who had most confidence in the loyalty of the people had no conception that such a movement could possibly have been produced. But great as has been the outburst of loyalty, so will be the disappointment—the awful disappointment—of those who pledged their loyalty to the Government, which is resolved to betray them. And this official wrote to me—he did not know at the time he wrote what the Government were doing—"All will go well if the Government only persist in their present firm attitude." We know what has become of the firm attitude of the Government. It has gone the way of their firm attitude against Mr. Parnell, it has gone the way of their firm attitude against the Boers, it has gone the way of their firm attitude against the Mahdi, it has gone the way of every firm purpose they have ever made. The fact of the matter is, gentlemen, that you are being humbugged into national and imperial ruin. The Vote of Credit for eleven millions is, I am certain, as great a sham as the resolution to smash the Mahdi was a sham, and as the great speech of Mr. Gladstone about which the Liberal papers made such a tremendous gush was a sham. You are being deluded and betrayed into as great a surrender of national and imperial interests as was ever negotiated by a British Ministry. The fact of the matter is, that the Ministers of the Crown are not thinking of the interests of the country; they are thinking only of the General Election and the prospects of the Liberal party, and, compared with the prospects of the Liberal party, the interests of the country are as nothing. These Ministers—who really are not Ministers; they are not statesmen; they are simply electioneering agents, and electioneering agents of a very low order; I believe myself that Mr. Schnadhorst would be a greater statesman than some of the Ministers of the Crown—these Ministers know, or at any rate think they know, that if any action of theirs, any strong defence of the rights and interests of the empire should involve them in war with Russia, they might possibly lose the Nonconformist vote; therefore, rather than lose the Nonconformist vote, they sacrifice honour and the interests of the empire. Well, I believe for my own part that they are under a total misapprehension. We all know that the Nonconformists of this country, like

all sensible men, believe that peace is the greatest of all British interests ; but at the same time I imagine that the Nonconformists of England are made of very much the same stern and uncompromising stuff as the Nonconformists of the days of Cromwell, and I have an idea that if the Nonconformists of this country properly realized the beneficent nature of the great civilizing work we are carrying on in India, they would heartily support any Government which would oppose Russian aggression. I am constantly told by Liberals—I hear it repeatedly—“ Oh, it’s no use resisting Mr. Gladstone ; it’s no use saying anything against him ; the mass of the people don’t care about India, and if Mr. Gladstone chooses to give up India, the masses of the people will support him.” That is the constant expression I hear among my Liberal friends. I believe they make a great mistake by confounding the people of England with the Radical party. I said the other night in the House of Commons that I feared we had lost India, and the remark was received by the Radicals with shouts of derision. I am certain that if Mr. Gladstone were to rise in the House and announce the final loss of India, the announcement would be received by the Radical party with vociferous cheers.

THE VALUE OF INDIA.

It is just possible that some of our people may have been led away by the doctrines of a certain school of politicians, who have been for years preaching that India is a burden, and we should be better without it. One of the greatest apostles of that creed was Lord Sherbrooke, then Mr. Lowe, and he wrote a great many articles to prove his case. And I think that a great many people have been to some extent influenced by those articles and those doctrines—people whose occupations do not give them perhaps time very closely to study the great question, and those people seem to think that we keep India as a matter of glory and as a matter of sentiment rather than as a matter of positive national advantage. Well, now, if I was sure that I was not wearying you too much I should like to give you a few, and a very few, most instructive figures as to the value of India to England : not the sentimental, not the military, but the positive material value in pounds, shillings, and pence. I

find, in looking over various returns issued by the Board of Trade, that the trade between India and England amounts to some 28 millions of exports from India and 30 millions of imports into India of British goods. Now, I believe I am right in saying that India is the only free foreign market which we have at the present moment. I find that of the total shipping employed in conveying commerce to and from India, 88 per cent. is British. I find that the tonnage of that 88 per cent. is 2,876,000 tons, that the number of ships is 3,500, and the estimated number of sailors employed is between 50,000 and 60,000. I find that the home charges paid by India to your country here include two and a quarter millions every year for imported stores, and two and three-quarter millions every year for interest on loans. I took the trouble to go a little closer into the nature of your exports to India, because I thought it might be interesting to ascertain, or at any rate to make an estimate as to the number of English people who are kept in employment by working for the Indian market. I find that you export altogether to India about 30 millions of British manufactures; that of cotton yarn manufactures you import into India 25 millions in pounds sterling, and that employs 250,000 people. I will not take all the items, but in iron and steel you import about two millions in pounds sterling; in woollen manufactures about one million in pounds sterling; and altogether, going over the various items into which your exports can be divided, I find that by your Indian trade, and by the totally free market which you enjoy in India, you are able to keep in active employment some 357,000 artisans. Now, these 357,000 artisans may each of them be taken to represent some four or five persons, and taking these, with 50,000 or 60,000 British seamen, and also some 100,000 British born subjects employed in India, paid by India, and sending their salaries or a great portion of their salaries home to England for the maintenance of their families and relations—taking all these figures, I find about two and a half millions of your people may be estimated to depend absolutely upon Indian trade; and if the Indian market were closed to you, these two and a half millions of people would be probably thrown out of employment and have nothing to do but starve. But there is one more item which people ought to recollect when they

say that India is of no value to England. The total amount of British capital raised up to 31st of March 1884, and invested in Indian railways, was £142,500,000. The capital expended on guaranteed railways has been £70,000,000, and the interest which these railways have paid back to England up to the present moment, and which has come back into this country, has been £89,000,000. I should like to know what would become of the £142,500,000 invested in Indian railways if the doctrines of Mr. Lowe and that school of the Radical party as to our being perfectly able to do without India, were carried out; what would become of it if we lost India to-morrow, as we might very well do? These are figures which I had only time to get out rapidly, and of which I have only given you a summary; but I would advise every one in this room, who has to carry on arguments with political opponents as to the value of India materially to this country, to study this question, in order to show the people of this country that without India England would cease to be a nation. All this inexhaustible and inestimable source of national wealth depends upon nothing and is preserved to you by nothing except your character and your credit. The 60,000 bayonets and the 100,000 European officials could never keep India for you without them, if they were not backed up by the reputation and the might and majesty of Britain. And if you lose this reputation you must inevitably lose at the same time this inestimable and inexhaustible source of national wealth. They may laugh at prestige in India as much as ever they like, they may say it is a foreign word and it represents a thing with which they will have nothing to do; but all I can say is, that that prestige means to you the active and industrious employment and maintenance of some 2,500,000 of your fellow-countrymen. That is the practical meaning of prestige. All that source of national wealth is, to my mind, being deliberately given away by Her Majesty's present Government.

A WORD TO THE TORY PARTY.

The responsibility of the Government of this country is undoubtedly very great, and the responsibility of the Parliament of this country is, to my mind, greater still.

But greater than the responsibility of the Government and greater than the responsibility of Parliament is, to my mind, the responsibility of the Tory party. Let us take care how we meet that responsibility ; let us take care that while we are very free in bringing accusations against the Government—let us take care that no accusations lie against us. We accuse the Government very often of being afraid to face responsibility : are we facing responsibility? We accuse the Government of being unable to make up their mind ; can we make up our mind? We accuse the Government of drifting ; are not we drifting? We accuse the Government of being a Government whose action is too late : let us take care that the action of the Tory party is not too late. There is not, to my certain knowledge, a man in the Conservative party in the House of Commons who does not know and believe in the bottom of his heart that this latest action of her Majesty's Government is a total surrender to Russia, and that that surrender to Russia is a fruitful and formidable danger to your Indian Empire. Well, if that is so, let us say so. Do not let us confine ourselves to saying so by speeches on the platform, and by a quantity of declamatory rhetoric in the country ; but let us say so, and show that we believe it by our action and votes in Parliament itself. At the present moment by our inaction we are becoming a party to the action of the Government. If that is so, let us cease from that inaction. Let us not only put our foot down, but let us keep it down, and let us use all our strength and knowledge and ability, if possible, to change the advisers of the Crown, and to change the advisers of the Crown by the refusal of the supplies which they demand. If I could have my way that is what I should do.

REFUSE SUPPLIES.

Now, there are some very foolish, and very absurd, and very ignorant ideas held by certain people, that what is called the refusal of supplies, if carried out, brings the whole public service, the Army and the Navy, and the special military preparations, to a standstill. I am sorry to say that the idea is apparently held by many members of Parliament who ought to know better, and Her Majesty's Government sedulously foster and propagate that idea,

although no one so effectually disproved it as they did themselves by their action in 1878. But, as a matter of fact, the refusal of supplies does nothing of the kind. All it does is this—it changes the Government of the country ; and the public service, the Army, the Navy, and the special military preparations go on just as if supplies had not been refused. I will illustrate that to you in this way—that of the Government vote of credit of £11,000,000 which Mr. Gladstone has demanded, some two-thirds has already been entirely spent, and no action of the House of Commons or the Tory party could possibly alter it. You could not get the money back, and if you put a new Government in power they would probably spend more, and come and ask you to sanction more expenditure. If the Tory party like, and if they felt that they had the country, or a majority of the country, behind them, they have still an opportunity of resisting Mr. Gladstone's demand for supply by our action on Monday, when for once in a way the Opposition pulled themselves together and made a stand. We have secured as the first Order of the Day on Monday the next stage of the vote of credit. It is for Tories in the country to consider, and for Tories in Parliament to consider, seriously whether, under present circumstances, it is wise or constitutional to grant supplies to the Crown. The Government are desperately anxious, and Mr. Gladstone is desperately anxious, that he should not be opposed on this vote of credit. He sometimes resorts to denunciations and sometimes he has recourse to the most pathetic appeals. The object of all these manœuvres is that he may not be opposed, because Mr. Gladstone knows perfectly well that to be opposed is to be exposed. The Government first of all say that in refusing supplies we are endangering the public service. Well, I can only characterize that assertion by referring to the rich and varied vocabulary of Mr. Bright, and say that it is simply a lie. Then the Government say we have no information, that Parliament has no official information, and, therefore, is not in a position to discuss their policy. When we say, "Will you give us information?" they say "No, we cannot possibly give you any information." Those are the sort of manœuvres which are resorted to, and they are very valuable so long as they are given in to, but perfectly worthless as soon as they are resisted. In any case, after having

carefully studied the whole situation, I feel the proper course of the Tory party is perfectly clear—they ought to refuse supplies. If they succeed in their object, the Government is changed, the country is saved, and war, I believe, will be entirely avoided. Because of the advent to Parliament of a new and Tory Government the whole state of the feelings of European nations towards England would be so entirely altered that Russia would not dare to attack you. But suppose we were to fail in our efforts—as, being in a minority, we probably should do—we should at any rate have attained this—we should have cleared ourselves of the awful fate of being involved in the hideous responsibility of the action of those who are, I believe, ruining our country.

A HOPELESSLY RUINED EMPIRE AND AN ETERNALLY
BLIGHTED NAME.

I have spoken of the responsibility of the Tory party as being very heavy, but there is a power above the Tory party whose responsibility is greater still. I speak to you, gentlemen, in this room, and if I could I would speak to the other electors of Great Britain who are outside, and who see all that is going on, who have the various matters carefully, accurately, and intelligently explained to them, and who still allow themselves to slumber and to sleep. Yours, gentlemen, are the possessions which are in danger, yours is the responsibility for protecting those possessions. You, the new democracy, together with the newly-enfranchised electors, you are now in charge. Parliament and the Government and the Tory party may by their respective action more or less divest themselves of their responsibility, but you, do whatever you can, you never can get rid of yours. It is you, gentlemen, who now possess the real and supreme power, and if you refrain from using that power wisely, if you abstain from political activity, if you allow yourselves to be cheated and humbugged and drugged into a kind of dreamy and superstitious torpor of hero-worship, heedless of the cries and exclamations and shakings of those whose business it is to endeavour to arouse you, I warn you that upon you will descend in full measure, pressed down and running over, the curses of your children, to whom you have handed down a possession far different to that which you yourselves

ceived—a hopelessly-ruined Empire, and an eternally
ghed name.

THE DECLINE OF BRITAIN.

(AT THE ST. STEPHEN'S CLUB, MAY 20, 1885.)

It was a very distinguished honour when you were kind enough to ask me to preside at this house dinner to-night, but I own I could have wished that the duty had been more purely honorary, or at any rate that you might have spared me from the very difficult and arduous task of responding to the toast of the Tory party. And when I listened to the eloquent terms in which Mr. Clarke proposed to you the toast, I thought your arrangements would have been more complete if you had called upon him to respond to it. The toast of the Tory party is one which, to do it anything like justice, would require a large amount of preparation and rethought, which Parliamentary occupation has precluded me from giving; but I feel sure that if I shall in any degree fall short of your legitimate expectations of the manner in which that toast ought to be responded to you will forgive me.

COERCION.

I imagine that one of the leading features of the cause and of the principles of the Tory party would be the maintenance of the connection between Ireland and Great Britain. Therefore I would ask your attention for a few passing moments to the condition of Ireland as it is illustrated to us by the Ministerial announcements of the other night—that the Government intend to apply to Parliament for a renewal of those Acts which are called the Coercion Acts. I do not think that for the purposes of the consideration of this topic it is of very much moment whether the demand made by the Government is for great or small powers. It is sufficient to remember that to the Irish people those powers, whether large or small, come under the name of coercive, exceptional, and peculiar legislation. Well, I own that I was somewhat shocked at observing, or at any rate fancying I observed, that that announcement

was received very much as a matter of course. But I should like, if I might, to explain to you my views as to the real nature and feeling of that announcement. I lay this down without any hesitation as an absolute and unimpeachable constitutional doctrine that while any British Government may reasonably and with perfect confidence apply to Parliament in times of great popular disorder for exceptional and unconstitutional powers, at the same time when that popular disorder has passed away the Government is bound by the highest considerations of public policy and of constitutional doctrine to return to and to rely on the ordinary law. We had every reason to hope, and I think every reason ultimately to believe, that the time of great popular disorder in Ireland had passed away, or at any rate had been largely mitigated. The published returns presented to Parliament showed no abnormal amount of crime. Ireland is, as you know, marvellously free from ordinary crime as we know it in this country, and the peculiar class of crime which is known as agrarian outrage has sunk to a very low level. We had not recently seen in the papers any alarming accounts of violent meetings or violent speeches. Irish politics will always be turbulent, and Irish affairs will always be attended with difficulty and anxiety. But to my mind there was nothing at the present moment abnormal in the state of Ireland in that respect. Well, we also knew that land courts, with the design of conciliating the mass of the tenantry, and also, I have no doubt, with the design of giving satisfaction to the authorities, had ruthlessly lowered the landlords' rents in all quarters of Ireland. We knew that the harvest for the last four years had been exceptionally good, and that there was no amount of acute agricultural distress—a fertile source of outrage at all times. We knew Parliament had thought this the proper moment to enfranchise some 700,000 of the Irish peasantry, and we knew further that the Prince and Princess of Wales, with a devotion to the public service perhaps unequalled in the history of the Royal family, and with a rare courage, heroism, and resolution, had visited Ireland, had traversed the country from end to end, and had—as we were informed—been received as they had a right to be received. Well, that was the amount of our knowledge. But now, gentlemen, what does this mean

—this announcement of the Government that they are prepared to ask Parliament for a renewal of the Coercion Act? It means that our knowledge was based upon a wrong foundation, that all our ideas were wrong, and that all our hopes were fallacious. And it means that Her Majesty's Government have terrible facts and terrible evidence to adduce to Parliament in support of their demand as to the real condition of Ireland. It means, gentlemen, that the Government will tell you that the hearts of the Irish people are full of treason, that everywhere in Ireland there are bands of assassins and midnight marauders, of desperate men who may be controlled by no ordinary law, lying in wait, ready to burst forth into malignant life and malevolent activity. It means, gentlemen, that these desperadoes will, in the opinion of the Government, enjoy to a great extent the sympathy of the Irish people. It means that the remedial legislation of the Liberal Government, of which we have heard so much, has not yet, though it has been four years in operation, produced any effectual results. It means that Mr. Gladstone's message of peace has been scornfully repudiated. It means that the boasted administration of Lord Spencer—which Liberal organs are never tired of extolling—it means that the wisdom and experience of that Whig nobleman have all been fruitless and vain. And in a word, gentlemen, it means that the loyal—or as we thought the loyal—reception of their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales was really of no meaning, and that really the state of Ireland at the present moment is as dark and gloomy and bad as it was in the dreary days of 1879 and 1880—those perilous days of stark famine and trouble.

TERRIBLE NEWS.

Mark me, gentlemen, that is the meaning of the demand of the Government for coercive legislation in Ireland. All this the Government will have to face, and that is the confession which Mr. Gladstone and his colleagues will have to make, because otherwise the Government would not be justified in the demands they are making. This demand for peculiar penal laws for Ireland at the present moment would be an act in the highest degree impolitic, unless supported by overwhelming and overpowering

evidence which no one could resist. Because what has been the attitude of Parliament in the past year? Parliament has just enfranchised considerably over half a million of the Irish people, and has declared them to be capable citizens, fit to take part in the government of this empire. In a few months these new voters will exercise their rights for the first time. Now, I ask you would it not have been well, would it not have been hopeful—would it not have been cheering, if you could have tried to put some kind thoughts towards England into their minds by using the last days of this unlucky Parliament to abrogate all that harsh legislation which is so odious to Englishmen, and which undoubtedly abridges the freedom and insults the dignity of a sensitive and an imaginative race? How do you suppose all these 700,000 new electors will go to the poll? What thoughts will they have in their minds? Will they not go to the poll with the knowledge that the Parliament of England in its last dying days—in a moment when they were unrepresented who had been declared to be capable citizens—had given them what they will think a parting kick? Will they not go to the poll with the resolute determination to give their unanimous and strenuous support to the party of Mr. Parnell, who tell them with all the force of ability and eloquence that Ireland can never be prosperous, can never be happy, and can never be free, until complete national independence and total separation from Great Britain has been for ever achieved? Well, I say, gentlemen, that these arguments are obvious, and that the logic of this argument is irresistible; and therefore I say that it must of necessity be that the Government proposal for the renewal of coercion will be supported by the most gloomy and despairing revelations as to the real condition of Ireland. Of that I am certain, because otherwise the leaders of the Radical party in the Cabinet, Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke—who, after all, are men of common sense, and I also gladly acknowledge men of great ability—they would never have given consent to legislation so exceedingly awkward for the Radical party. Well, I say to you, gentlemen, as I said the other day about the Government surrender to Russia, I say that is terrible news. I say it is even greatly more than that; it is a crushing condemnation of the Irish policy of the Gladstone Government during the last five

years ; and I say more, it is irrefutable and unanswerable evidence that the Liberal party cannot govern Ireland without that arbitrary force which all their greatest orators have over and over again declared is no remedy for lawlessness. That I pass by, merely respectfully entreating you to give it your deepest consideration from the point of view which I have ventured to suggest, to consider it without prejudice. I believe most firmly that on that subject this ought to be the attitude of the Tory party—that while they are ready and willing to grant to any Government of the Queen whatever powers may be necessary, on evidence adduced, for the preservation of law and order, they ought to be anxious and careful beyond measure not to be committed to any act or policy which should unnecessarily wound and injure the feelings and the sentiments of our brothers on the other side of the Channel of St. George.

THE FOREIGN OUTLOOK.

Is it not deplorable that that should be the condition of Ireland at the present moment—at a moment when I venture to say it is more than ever indispensable that the United Kingdom should be in reality, as well as in name, united? I have endeavoured, to the best of my ability, to study the history of our country, and I cannot call to mind, and I do not know whether anybody in this room can call to mind, any period in that history when you had to deal with, and when you had to resist so many foes, open and concealed, at the same time. You have the Great Power of Russia advancing rapidly on India, and you see her putting forward day by day as you give way to her more and more preposterous intentions. What is meant by this you can see by the vote of credit of eleven millions which was demanded from Parliament, and from the financial deficit of unparalleled magnitude which is the accompaniment of that vote of credit. Mr. Gladstone, speaking at Oxford in 1877 and 1878, talked about the vote of discredit of the late Government. He said he would not call it a vote of credit, but a vote of discredit. I think we might apply that term to Mr. Gladstone's late demand.

Well, what are the other features of the foreign situation? You have Turkey, whose alliance for the purpose of resisting a Russian advance is absolutely indispensable

to you—you have Turkey hopelessly estranged by a long course of unfriendly, and sometimes hostile, proceedings. Do you think that now, in the hour of your need, Turkey has forgotten the demonstration of Dulcigno? Do you think she has forgotten the burglarious proposal of Mr. Gladstone to seize the port of Smyrna, the violent pressure used against her by Mr. Gladstone in favour of Greece, the manner in which she was deluded and tricked by the British Ambassador at the time of the Conference of Constantinople when your forces bombarded Alexandria and occupied Egypt? All these things the Liberal Government were very proud of at the time. They thought them acts of high policy. I think they would rather not be reminded of them now. Do you think Turkey has forgotten the consistent and persistent neglect and contumely which has been poured on the rights of the Sultan in Egypt by Mr. Gladstone's Government? Do you think she has forgotten what took place only three weeks ago, the outrageous menace by which Lord Granville—bold only against the weak—extorted from the Turkish Envoys their consent to the Egyptian Financial Convention. And really, gentlemen, to show you the inveterate obstinacy and ignorance of weak noblemen—only on Monday last in the House of Lords the great Duke of Argyll, who professes to be a statesman, thought this a convenient and seasonable and useful moment to make a very elaborate attack upon the Mohammedan States in general and the Government of the Sultan in particular. All acts of that kind are acts of lunacy, because it is upon the friendship of Turkey that your power for successfully rolling back the tide of Russian conquest in Central Asia absolutely depends. Let me say, with all due respect, that if you desire to gain a clear view of the state of European politics at the present moment you must realize this, that the foreign policy which Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville and his colleagues have pursued during five years is against what is neither more nor less than a European combination.

The Government of France is raising every day fresh difficulties, fresh embarrassments, and fresh objections to the almost impossible task you have on hand of the administration of Egypt. No matter whether it is the financial Convention, the Suez Canal, or the *Bosphore Egyptien*, the conduct of the Government of France is distinctly hostile

to you, and France is taking this course with the knowledge and approval of the other Powers ; and you are not only on the brink of war with Russia, but undoubtedly your relations with the Government of France are dangerously strained ; and in addition to all that, in order, as it were, to illuminate the whole situation, the tone of the entire European Press, which strangely reflects with curious accuracy the mind and intentions of Europe—every morning the European Press is full of indignation and contempt for the policy and position of this country.

A 'POLITICAL RODENT.

In these difficult and alarming circumstances what is the state of mind of the Queen's Government? I can only describe it as being a state of mind of paralysis and of infatuation. The Ministers are paralyzed by internal divisions, but at the same time they are infatuated in the belief that they have done their duty. This curious state of mind is peculiarly illustrated by a speech made by Lord Derby on Monday night. It was a most remarkable speech, and I am surprised that it did not at the time attract the notice of the Press. It was an attempt to answer Lord Salisbury's comments upon the policy of the Government in the Soudan. I was so much struck with one or two of the passages of the speech that I copied them out and brought them down here to-night. Now, Lord Derby belongs to a tribe of political rodents. The only thing that makes me at all hesitate in my firm conviction as to the precarious condition of the Government is that Lord Derby has not yet deserted it. But as I said before, he is in an infatuated state of mind, and his ordinary bright common sense has deserted him. Now listen to Lord Derby's speeches, for they illustrate that there are not any two members of the Government who look in the same way at the same question. He said in the House of Lords—"It has been said by some noble lords that there has been no justification for the Arab bloodshed, but the justification is very clear and perfectly conclusive to my mind." His mind ! "Who are the Arab tribes," he asks, "but a people that are engaged in an aggressive movement for the propagation of their own religious views." But the moment I read that I thought it a most extraordinary description of

the poor Soudanese. I remembered a description of the Soudanese people given by Mr. Gladstone only a short time ago, and this was the description given by him. He was dealing with an allegation that the Conservative party wanted to force him into a war for the conquest of the Soudan, and what did he say about it? He said it would be a war of conquest against a people struggling to be free, and then there was a cry of "No, no." "Yes," said Mr. Gladstone, "I say they are a people rightly struggling to be free;" and yet Lord Derby said they were engaged in an aggressive movement for the propagation of their own religious views. No wonder that the policy of the Government is chaotic when two Ministers regard events from such curiously different points of view. "However," Lord Derby goes on to say, "we may feel tolerably sure"—that is the Liberal Ministry, for it would be no one else—"that after the defeat they have sustained they will not repeat their attempt, and therefore the operations in which we have been engaged have borne the desired result." Well, that shows that Lord Derby's mental powers are leaving him altogether, and he cannot even recollect the event that took place in April last; because in April last General Graham, to use Lord Derby's euphemism, checked the Arab tribe—I think the better word would have been slaughtered—however, he checked them, and came away, and no sooner came away than Osman Digna was as powerful as ever, and kept the inhabitants of the Soudan alarmed for their lives. You have had another expedition, and Lord Derby fatuously believes that when that expedition departs Osman Digna will keep quiet and no longer threaten the people of the Soudan. Lord Derby goes on to say something more remarkable. He now begins to be philanthropic, but selfishly philanthropic. He is only philanthropic to the English people. "I maintain," says Lord Derby, "that it is not our business to take possession of every part of the world which is inhabited by savages, and which it might be in our power to civilize." Nobody ever asked Lord Derby to adopt a policy of that kind with respect to the occupation of the Soudan. The Government are solely responsible for that act. We certainly blame them for having sent the army of Hicks Pasha to certain defeat. We certainly blame them for having sent the army of Baker Pasha to certain defeat,

We blame them for leaving the garrisons of Sinkat and Tokar to be massacred and taken prisoners ; but no responsible member of the Tory party asked the Government to take possession of every part of the world which is inhabited by savages, for the purpose of civilizing them? Lord Derby goes on to say—"I want to know where obligations of this kind are to end." That is what we all want to know. "Have we no duties near home? Is it believed that our civilization is so great that we have nothing to do within a few miles from where we are now sitting? Can we say that we are absolutely so free from poverty and distress that we can afford to spend millions upon millions upon the improvement of races with which we have no connection?" The improvement of races! Good heavens, gentlemen! could infatuation go further? Lord Derby assumes that her Majesty's Government have been spending millions and millions upon the improvement of races with which we have no connection. Well, I should put it in another way, and I should say they have spent millions and millions upon the fruitless destruction of races who have never done them one piece of harm. They have slaughtered thousands of Arabs, they have desolated hundreds of Arab homes, they have burnt Arab villages, they have blocked up Arab wells, they have sacrificed wantonly the life of the greatest friend of African humanity that ever existed—General Gordon. They have stirred up among the Arab tribes blood feuds which will last at least for a century or more ; and then Lord Derby tells the House of Lords that he cannot afford to spend millions upon millions on the improvement of races with which he, Lord Derby, had no connection. It is not over yet. This renegade earl went on to observe : "I say, if it be a duty on the part of any Power which is civilized to conquer savage races for the purpose of improving their condition, then I say we have done our good share of it, and are doing it now." Our good share in improving the condition of savage races ! Did they do their good share in that work when they positively instigated the Afghans to resist the Russian troops, and when they basely abandoned them? They did their good share of the civilizing work when they accepted the services of the gallant Bechuana chiefs, and then basely deserted them to the plundering Boers? I should like any Minister—be it

Lord Derby or anybody else—to take the map of the world, and to put his finger on it, and to say “There, in that spot, we have done a good share of civilizing work.” What does Lord Derby say? I think it is rather extraordinary on the part of any one, whether Englishman or foreigner, to say to us “You have not done your share in the work of civilization.” The cry re-echoed from end to end of England and of Europe, that the Government, so far from doing their fair share of civilizing work, have rolled back civilization, and shed blood like water without any end or result; and that so far from civilization and the happiness of humanity being promoted by their five years of office, it has been retarded and injured and damaged. Is it not then remarkable that a Liberal Minister can at the present moment venture in the terms I have quoted to address such an assembly as the House of Lords?

LAMENTABLE CONDITION OF ENGLAND'S ENVOYS.

There is a very melancholy reflection which I should like to bring to your minds at the present inoment—that whereas in old days it used to be a position of great safety for any country to be an ally of England, it was also a position of great pride and dignity for any individual to be an envoy of England. But what is the state of things nowadays? All that is changed. Our two most prominent allies, the Khedive of Egypt and the Ameer of Afghanistan, have had to submit to a very considerable loss of valuable territory, and as for the friendly native tribes of the Soudan or of South Africa, they have had to submit to being plundered of all their possessions, and deprived of their liberty and their homes. As for our envoys, the position, nowadays, of an envoy of England is simply ruin. Take them all as they come, one after another. There was Sir Bartle Frere. He was abandoned and thrown over. There was Sir Evelyn Wood, a soldier of renown, who was sent out to vindicate the honour and authority of the Queen, and was forced by the Government at home to conclude a disgraceful treaty. There was Mr. Goschen, who was sent to Constantinople to carry out an impossible policy, and was recalled in something very like disgrace. There was Lord Dufferin, sent out to

re-organize Egypt; who devoted all his abilities for a considerable space of time to elaborate plans for the improvement of the Egyptian people, and who produced a wonderful report; but was recalled home in disgrace. There was Lord Northbrook, who was sent out also on a similar errand, who produced another report, and who came back in disgrace. There has been Lord Wolseley, who was sent out to rescue Gordon, who was given *carte blanche*—that was the expression—to smash the Mahdi, and who has been recalled in something like disgrace; and, last but not least, there has been your distinguished envoy on the frontier of India in Central Asia, Sir P. Lumsden, who has gone through every peril and privation, who has given the Government at home the most honourable, truthful, and the best information, who has been recalled in something very like disgrace, and who has the mortification of seeing that his adversary—who had tricked him, lied to him, and deceived him as only a Russian can—has been rewarded by the Emperor of Russia with unusual and distinguished reward. But the greatest of all our envoys, the greatest hero of a century, who was sent out by the Government with a most solemn promise of support, General Gordon, has lost his life. Others have damaged their reputation, but he has lost his life. What was the position of your ambassador at St. Petersburg, Sir Edward Thornton, who has a right to see any Foreign Secretary of any foreign country to which he is accredited? He goes to the Foreign Secretary at a moment of the utmost importance, and he is told that he cannot be seen, that he may call again—in fact, he is treated very much in the way you would treat an unfortunate creditor. Surely the country must be in an evil state when this happens, a state in which no envoy in his senses can consent to represent his country abroad, and a condition when the Powers of Europe cannot, if they wish to preserve their safety and their integrity, consent to become an ally of Great Britain.

THE OLD GENERATION AND THE NEW.

I am afraid I have detained you very long, but as a matter of fact and as a political truth, at the present moment the Conservative cause is really to expose and to enlarge on all these facts to the public, and to repre-

sent their true meaning and their nature to the people. I came here to-night, gentlemen, to thank you for having done me the great honour of inviting me to preside, but my chief reason for coming here was that I knew I should meet a very large number of gentlemen who, by their position and by their knowledge, can directly or indirectly command influences which will sway hundreds and thousands of the electors. You have indeed a very noble cause, and your principles are solid and true. They are principles which must triumph if they are properly advocated. All that is wanted is courage and energy. I agree with all that fell so admirably just now from my friend Mr. Clarke, and I will give you examples of courage and energy drawn from the new generation and the old generation, which I think are worthy of your attention. To my certain knowledge Lord John Manners, one of the most distinguished representatives of the Tory party, and one of the few remaining representatives of the old school of politicians and statesmen, has within the last twelve months on two occasions left his house and his bed at the peril of his life to take part in a division in the House of Commons in support of his party. That is the old generation. Well, only the other day, Lord Galway, one of our most able county members, after having commanded for a week a regiment of yeomanry, and having been engaged all day in putting that regiment through their manœuvres, came up one evening by a late train to take part in the division in the House of Commons. The division took place at three in the morning. Lord Galway left King's-cross at five in the morning by the newspaper train, and was at the head of his regiment at ten in the morning in time for the annual inspection. That is what I call energy, and that is what I call political courage and devotion to the public service. I think you will admit that at any rate we in Parliament have, according to the best of our light, and power, and abilities done our duty. We have a very uphill task to perform—that of endeavouring to dissipate a majority upon whom no argument, however forcible, will prevail; and I quite confess that there are times when the spirit grows faint, and when the heart grows heavy. You also have a difficult task to perform, for you have, according to your influence and according to your position, to endeavour to move the masses of the people who

by their avocation and by their natural disposition are slow to move and hard to arouse. But of this I am certain, that if all gentlemen belonging to the Conservative party in England, occupying positions analogous to those which you in this room occupy at the present moment, will only display in the coming electoral contest a one-hundredth part of the energy and courage which signalized the actions of Lord Galway and Lord John Manners, then, gentlemen, the constituencies are carried, and, what is more, you will have the high reward of having saved your country.

THE TORY PROGRAMME.

(AT BOW, JUNE 3, 1885.)

I cannot help thinking that the occasion upon which we are met is strikingly indicative of the change which has come over the Tory party. I imagine that a generation ago the Tory party would to-day have gone to the Derby. But owing to the exigencies of the time we have altogether ceased to be a party of pleasure or amusement; we have become a serious and earnest political party, thoroughly democratic in its nature, and we occupy ourselves on this Derby evening by considering the prospects of our party and the condition of our country. I feel very little doubt myself that, contrasted with our present occupation, the entire Radical party is at the present moment returning in a state of more or less exhilaration from Epsom Downs. The Tower Hamlets is a place, perhaps beyond all others, where a toast of this kind can be proposed with satisfaction, and can be responded to with confidence, and I shall, before I conclude, call upon certain gentlemen to respond for this toast whose names will be received with the warmest acclamation—the Conservative candidates for the Tower Hamlets. They are a body of gentlemen who are going to fight an arduous battle within a very short time, who are going to sacrifice much of their material resources, physical and pecuniary, for the sake of the Tory party, and they are undoubtedly entitled to your warmest and to your most effective support. Mr. Ritchie has represented the Con-

servative party of the Tower Hamlets with his usual gallantry for nearly twelve years. He has gained a personal position in the House of Commons which I venture to say is second to no other member of the Tory party. And for my own part I will only add that upon all subjects of metropolitan interest I take Mr. Ritchie as my leader, while upon all questions of national and imperial importance not a shadow of a difference has ever arisen between Mr. Ritchie and myself. There are other gentlemen whose names I would bring before you, gentlemen ; such as Mr. Denzil Onslow, who will contest, and contest successfully, the borough of Poplar ; Mr. Spencer Charrington, Mr. Norris, and Colonel Cowan. The history of the Conservative cause in the Tower Hamlets deserves to be commemorated. I am informed that your association was founded in the year 1866, at a time when Parliamentary reform was in the air, but at that time the whole of the East of London was supposed to be entirely and hopelessly given up to the Radical party. But in spite of that prevailing idea, several energetic minds formed this association, and had carried it to such a development that in the year 1868 you ran your own candidate for the Tower Hamlets. I am informed that at that time there was literally no limit to the ridicule and contempt with which the Radical party treated your efforts, and, more than that, that they resorted freely—as they will under certain circumstances resort freely now—to the most brutal and the most ferocious methods of personal violence and intimidation. Undeterred by that, your candidate fought a most encouraging contest, and, encouraged by that contest, you in 1874 put forward Mr. Ritchie, whom, all honour to the Tower Hamlets, you succeeded in returning at the head of the poll. Nor did your efforts at that time slumber. You established a Conservative club ; you established a Conservative newspaper ; you paid the closest attention to the register, with the result that in the year 1880, in spite of all the various obstacles and difficulties and misfortunes which at that time beset the Tory party, you were again enabled to return to Parliament your respected member, Mr. Ritchie. And whereas in 1874 Mr. Ritchie had been placed at the head of the poll by some 7,000 votes, in the year 1880 he had at his back 12,000 voters of the Tower Hamlets. I like to

recall these things to your minds, not because I have the slightest idea that any one of you has forgotten them, but because I want to hold out the example of the Tower Hamlets to other towns in England where the Radical party is supposed to be strong, but where I believe, if the Radical party were resolutely opposed, the same results as have taken place in the Tower Hamlets would inevitably recur.

TEN POLICIES IN IRELAND.

I observe that the present principal accusation brought against the Conservative party nowadays is that they have no policy. The *Daily News*, the *Spectator*, and other Liberal luminaries, reiterated this accusation. Men of the eminence of Mr. Goschen, and moderate men like him, have been influenced by it, and only the other day we saw a prominent Conservative of experience and position, a man like Mr. Bartley, also give in to the same tendency of a certain class of opinion. If the allegation was true, we should be no worse than our opponents. It is, as you know, possible in this world to have too much of a good thing, and our opponents have undoubtedly many policies. They have a new policy for every week of the year. And I think it is not only for you, but for the people of England, to consider whether it might not be more prudent to try at any rate a party which may have no declared policy than to continue a party in power which has tried every imaginable and conceivable policy, and which has egregiously failed in every effort. Let me establish that position. Let me draw your attention to Ireland. How many policies have the Liberal Government successively tried in Ireland? Their first policy was that they would, for the government of Ireland, rely on the good sense and loyalty of the Irish people. Their second policy was to suspend the Habeas Corpus Act in Ireland. Their third policy was to establish a new tenure of land. Their fourth policy was to arrest Mr. Parnell and to suppress the Land League. Their fifth policy was to make a treaty with Mr. Parnell, and to revive the Land League under the name of the National League. Their sixth policy was to alter dangerously and prodigiously the criminal procedure in Ireland. Their seventh policy was to enfranchise 700,000 of the Irish peasants. Their eighth policy was to abolish the constitutional liberties of the 700,000 peasants whom

they have enfranchised. Their ninth policy—and now I am coming to the time when these policies have not lasted for months, but have only lasted literally for hours—their ninth policy was not to abolish the constitutional liberties of the 700,000 enfranchised peasants, but to grant Home Rule and to establish a new land law for Ireland. Their tenth policy was that they finally decide that they would abolish—or they are about to decide, perhaps I should be more correct in saying—the constitutional liberties of the 700,000 enfranchised peasants for one year more; that they would not at the present moment grant Home Rule, but that they would pretend to try to establish a totally new land law for Ireland. Now, these are the ten policies by which in the short space of less than five years her Majesty's Government have attempted to govern Ireland, and I defy any single person who tells me the Tory party have no policy—I defy him, no matter how great may be his wisdom and experience of public affairs, to make a guess or to make even a speculation as to which of these ten policies the Liberal party will adopt if you give them the majority at the next election. Well, on the tenth policy—you recollect what that was—her Majesty's Government are not altogether agreed. There is a little difference of opinion, and we are informed it is to be settled to-morrow. I am anxious, as I am sure you all are anxious, to render them what assistance we can to come to a conclusion as to the differences which divide them.

RENEWAL OF THE COERCION ACT.

What, then, is the meaning of these proposals? I am anxious to draw serious attention to this matter. I have found in politics that nothing is to be taken for granted; every proposition, although it may be the most obvious, must be narrowly scrutinized and criticized. Well, then, the Government are about to renew the Crimes Act and the Coercion Act for one year, and they are going to buy for the tenants of Ireland, with the money of the British taxpayers, the remaining rights of the landlords of Ireland. That is the policy which, as we understand, is now before the Cabinet. What are the chief powers of the Crimes Act in Ireland which Her Majesty's Government propose to renew, and which Mr. Gladstone considers to be equi-

table and beneficial? The Crimes Act, which was passed in 1882, gave power to the Crown to try prisoners who are accused of any crime by special juries, and to remove the place of trial from the locality in which the crime was committed. That was the power which the Crimes Act gave to the Government, and no doubt you are as well aware as I am that both in constitutional practice and by the common law of England any subject of the Queen, if accused of any crime, has a right to be tried by a jury of his equals, selected impartially, and to be tried in the locality where the crime was committed. Now the Government say to Parliament, by their proposal to renew the Crimes Act, that the state of Ireland is so different to the condition of England and Scotland that the most valuable and well-tryed guarantee for equal justice between man and man, and between the individual by himself as against society in general, can no longer be allowed to operate in Ireland. That is the position which the Government take up by their proposal to renew the Crimes Act. I now want you to give me your closest attention. Parliament has enfranchised the peasants of Galway, and Parliament by that Act has declared that the peasants of Galway are capable citizens, competent to exercise the highest rights of citizenship—namely, to elect a member of the Imperial Parliament. That was the position taken up when you passed the Franchise Act last year. But the Government, by the renewal of the proposal to renew the Crimes Act, take up this position, that the peasants of Galway are so ignorant or brutal, and so sympathizing with crime, that any Galway peasant who may be accused of crime cannot be tried by his fellow-inhabitants of the county of Galway, but must be taken far away, to Dublin or Belfast, or some other place, and not even there to be tried by people of the peasant class, whom you have also enfranchised, but by a special jury selected from the upper classes and mostly of the Protestant religion. I have endeavoured to place these two positions before you clearly, and what does the statement come to? It comes to this, in other words, that the policy of the Government in Ireland is to declare, on the one hand, by the passing of the Reform Bill, that the Irish people are perfectly capable of exercising for the advantage of the Empire the highest rights and privileges of citizenship,

and by the proposal to renew the Crimes Act they simultaneously declare, on the other hand, that the Irish people are perfectly incapable of performing for the advantage of society the lowest and most ordinary duties of citizenship. Now, that is the policy of a Liberal Government in the year of our Lord, 1885, under the sway of the greatest Prime Minister, and under the sway of the very best Parliament which the United Kingdom has ever experienced. All I can say is this, that if such an incoherent, such a ridiculous, such a dangerously ridiculous, combination of acts can be called a policy, then, thank God, the Conservative party have no policy.

SPLIT IN THE CABINET.

But that is not all; there is something even yet more ridiculous to which I wish to draw your attention. Then the Government perceived—for, after all, the Government is composed of men of great experience and ability—the ludicrous and farcical aspect of the position put before you; and Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke, who, however much we may disagree with them, are men of extremely precise and logical minds, and, more than that, with a great deal of common sense, and who have at any rate this merit, that they have been quite unable to absorb the peculiar hair-splitting and casuistical faculties possessed by the Prime Minister—they, at all events, perceived that this is a ridiculous position; and, therefore, Her Majesty's Government, we are informed on the highest authority, are in danger of breaking up. And so what do they propose? They propose, in order to keep together, and to prevent a split in the Cabinet at the present moment, to take up this position—and this is probably what will be proposed in Parliament, and that is why you ought to consider it carefully—they propose to ask for a renewal of the Crimes Act for one year. Now, what does that mean? In other words, it means this—that they propose, either to-morrow or a few days after, to inform Parliament that the incapacity, the ascertained incapacity, of the Irish people for the ordinary duties of citizenship will only last for twelve months more, and that after that time it will have entirely disappeared and passed away. Or, to put it before you in another aspect, it means this—that a whole

nation, which is at the present moment so ignorant, so brutal, so sympathizing with crime, however atrocious, that it cannot possibly be intrusted with the smallest share in the ordinary administration of justice, is by some mysterious process in the space of twelve months to be completely and entirely cured, and to become as trustworthy and as competent for every imperial and local purpose as the people of England and Scotland. That is positively the true meaning of the proposal of the Government, if such a decision they should arrive at. Suppose any member of the Tory party in 1880 had said that that would be the result of five years or more of Liberal Government in Ireland, would not every Radical speaker or every Radical paper at once have cried out that the person who made such an assertion was either a liar or a lunatic? However, the fact remains that that is the result, and what you have to consider is this, and what you have to bring before the minds of the many people with whom you are brought in contact, is this—is it safe, is it decently or commonly prudent, to renew to the party which has produced these results in Ireland at the next general election powers which will enable them to govern Ireland for another six years? That is the question which you must put before the electors of the Tower Hamlets. I myself, gentlemen, do not believe—it seems almost a truism to say so, but really in these days it is necessary to speak truisms—that you can safely fly in the face of logic or of common sense. Now, the affairs of private life are strangely analogous to the affairs of a nation. Suppose a man of large property was to engage an agent of whose character and antecedents he was so suspicious that he employed a detective to watch him night and day, that he carefully and secretly opened all his letters, that he scrutinized all his actions with every possible precaution, and yet at the same time was to give to this person the most complete control of his property, free and unrestricted access to the safe, to the strong-box or the muniment room, a perfect and unlimited right to draw whatever cheques he pleased, would not you say that such a man was stark, staring mad? And now look at the action of the Liberal Government. They give to the Irish peasants under the circumstances of the moment what amounts to nothing more or less than complete control over the Parliament of a

great and free people, but they declare by the renewal of the Crimes Act that the Irish people to whom they have given these enormous powers are themselves totally unworthy and hopelessly unfitted to be free. Now, I pray you not to press these remarks of mine too far. I made some remarks on this subject a short time ago, and the Liberal papers, with their usual impetuosity, and perhaps their usual malevolence, entirely misconstrued, and deliberately misconstrued, the nature of those remarks. I pronounced no opinion whatever on the two positions. I did not say which is right and which is wrong. All I say is that they cannot both be right. One of them must be wrong, and fatally wrong, and it is my business, I hold, as a member of the Opposition, to appear before you, in the first place, at any rate, as a critic, and I maintain that my criticism is indestructible and unanswerable, and I defy the Liberal Government and Mr. Gladstone, with all his casuistical powers, to escape from the dilemma in which not I but their own insane policy has irretrievably placed them.

EIGHTEEN POLICIES IN EGYPT.

So much for the Irish policy of the Government. I have shown you that in the short space of five years they have had ten different policies. I have shown you the absurdity and the danger of their latest policy, and I ask you, Does it lie in the mouth of people such as those to taunt the Conservative party with having no policy? I am going now to ask you to look elsewhere. I am going to ask you to look at Egypt. The first policy of the Liberal Government of Mr. Gladstone in Egypt in the year 1882 was not to interfere with the movement headed by Arabi Pasha. The second policy, which succeeded rapidly on the first, was to call a Conference of the European Powers at Constantinople, and to endeavour, by the concert of Europe, to interfere with the movement of Arabi Pasha. The third policy was to break up abruptly the Conference of Constantinople, and to send to the winds the concert of Europe, to bombard Alexandria by themselves, and smash Arabi Pasha. The fourth policy was not to be responsible in any way for the Egyptian Government. The fifth policy was to dismiss the Egyptian Government. The sixth policy was to evacuate the Soudan. The seventh policy was to send General

Gordon to restore order through the Soudan. The eighth policy was not to support General Gordon by any military force for fear of slaughtering any of the Arab tribes who were struggling to be free. The ninth policy was to endeavour to rescue General Gordon, and in the process to slaughter any number of thousands of the Arab tribes who were struggling to be free. The tenth policy was to avenge the death of General Gordon, to smash the Mahdi, and to make a railway. The eleventh policy, which varied rapidly on the tenth, was to forget General Gordon, to forget his death, to leave the Mahdi alone, and to abandon the railway. The twelfth policy was to summon a European Conference to settle Egyptian finance in London. The thirteenth policy was to break up again the European Conference in London, and to declare Egypt bankrupt. The fourteenth policy was to discover that Egypt was not bankrupt, and to offer to lend her eight millions. The fifteenth policy was to advise the Egyptian Government to break the international law guaranteeing the liberty of the foreign Press in Egypt, and not to pay the smallest attention to any protest from the Government of France. The sixteenth policy was to rebuke the Egyptian Government for having broken the law guaranteeing the liberty of the foreign Press in Egypt, and to apologize to the Government of France. The seventeenth policy, which only occurred the other day, was to advise the Egyptian Government, prematurely and before the Egyptian Convention had been sanctioned by the European Powers, to tax the foreign bondholders; and the eighteenth policy, which will probably be declared to-morrow or the next day, is that they have discovered that the action of the Egyptian Government in taxing the foreign bondholders is totally illegal, to rebuke the Egyptian Government for having taken such a course, to apologize to the Powers, and to force the Egyptian Government to pay back the money. Now, these eighteen policies, totally distinct, totally different—any one of them, perhaps, right in itself, but when joined with any other becoming by the juncture perfectly hopeless and self-destructive—these eighteen policies have in the short space of three years variegated the aspect of British interference in Egypt. Eighteen policies in thirty-six months, or at the rate of one policy for every two months. I want to know, again, does it

lie in the mouth of members of that Government or of the people who support that Government, to taunt the Tory party with having no policy?

NINE POLICIES IN CENTRAL ASIA.

So much with regard to Egypt. But now let us look at the position we hold with reference to Russia in Central Asia. The first policy of Her Majesty's Government was to give out and to declare in many speeches and in many documents that the Russian advance in Central Asia was nothing but the fear and the dream of an old woman, that the scientific frontier which Lord Beaconsfield had aimed at was nothing but the emanation of a diseased brain, and that the occupation of Candahar and the construction of the Quetta railway were neither more nor less than the acts of a lunatic. That was the first policy of the Government in 1880. The second policy, which was presented only about fifteen or sixteen months afterwards, was the endeavour to interfere between Persia and Russia, who were engaged in the settlement of their respective frontiers in Central Asia, and that was a policy which was obviously and hopelessly inconsistent with their first policy. Of course the Government were on that occasion roughly snubbed, and they meekly accepted the rebuff, and so they adopted a third policy upon the advice of Lord Granville. I have noticed in the course of that noble lord's career as Foreign Secretary that he is very apt to place himself in a position to receive rebuffs and then like a child he gets into a fit of sulks over these rebuffs. Well, in 1882, a third policy was adopted, and that was a refusal altogether to accept the offer made by Russia to delimit the frontier of Afghanistan; but that was at a period when Russia was very far away. The fourth policy of the British Government was to invite the Russian Government themselves to delimit the frontier in Afghanistan, but that was at a time when the Russian armies were very near. The fifth policy was to insist upon the delimitation of the frontier by a joint Commission and to send off their Commissioner without any idea whether Russia intended to send a Commissioner or not. The sixth policy of Her Majesty's Government—that was after the battle of Penjdeh—was to consent to the recall of the British Commissioner and to consent to delimit the frontier of Afghanistan

in London. The seventh policy was to declare that certain places were no doubt in Afghanistan and to advise the Afghans to defend them. The eighth policy was to surrender and to advise the Afghans to give way and to evacuate those places, although in the meantime the Afghans had fought a disastrous battle under the direct orders of England. And the ninth policy—and we have only got as far as that just now—is to recognize the Quetta railway, which they declared was quite a lunatic enterprise, to increase the Indian army very largely, and to levy heavy charges on India for the construction of a scientific frontier, which in the year 1880 they declared almost unanimously was an emanation of a diseased brain.

THE GENERAL RESULT.

I have shown you the nine distinct policies in the treatment of Central Asia and Indian affairs in the space of five years. Now, let me ask what is the general result of the ten distinct policies in Ireland, eighteen in Egypt, and nine distinct policies in Central Asia? In Ireland the whole people, with one very small exception, are determined to send to Parliament at the next elections representatives who shall be pledged to cease from no effort and to refrain from no act which may secure the total repeal of the union between England and Ireland. That is the result of the ten policies in Ireland. In Egypt the whole people, without any exception—the pashas and fellahs—are united for the first time in their history—are praying for our departure, are cursing our presence in the country, and the Powers of Europe are now openly combined together to make our position in Egypt impossible. That is the result of the eighteen policies of the Government in Egypt. Now in India our credit and our character are very nearly gone. I receive letters from all sources of opinion in India on that point, Anglo-Indian and native, and all are unanimous that the result of the negotiations with Russia is what I called it in the House of Commons the other day, a base and cowardly surrender. In the opinion of India the great Empire of Russia, the great figure of the White Czar, is triumphant; he has delimited the frontier he wished to obtain at the point of the sword, and in India the people have to face an immense increase of military charge. That is the result of the nine policies

of the Government with regard to the Indian frontier. Now, there is another point to which I should like to draw your attention, which is the cost, the actual money cost. The cost of the ten policies in Ireland of the Government has been to add one million a year to the expense of Irish government. The cost of the eighteen policies in Egypt has been ten millions and a half, paid down and taken out of the pockets of the people, either in the shape of votes of credit or supplementary estimates; but, in addition, we have guaranteed a loan of eight millions, and the Government have sacrificed the interest which was due to this country in respect of the Suez Canal shares. The Government have also sacrificed the sums due to this country in respect of the army of occupation. That is the cost of the eighteen policies in Egypt. And the cost of the nine policies in Central Asia has been £6,500,000 paid down, £5,000,000 raised on loans and charged to India for the construction of strategic railway, not of the slightest commercial importance, and not likely ever to pay one sixpence dividend, and the probable increase of £2,000,000 a year in the expenditure account of the Indian Budget. That is the cost of the nine policies in Asia; and the result, the grand total, of the thirty-seven different policies in Ireland, Egypt, and Central Asia is best represented to the British public by Mr. Childer's Budget, which places the expenditure at a sum of not less than £100,000,000 which states the deficit at £15,000,000, which places a tax on beer and spirits, already heavily taxed, which suspends the cardinal axiom of the Liberal creed—viz., the process of the reduction of the National Debt—which raises the income-tax to eightpence in the pound, and which presents to Europe the unusual and melancholy spectacle, at any rate as far as England is concerned, of total and hopeless financial chaos.

SHOCKED !

I ask you again, is it a reasonable accusation, is it an accusation to which any person of intelligence would pay the slightest attention, for any member of the Liberal Government or the Liberal party, after such a record as that, to taunt the Tory party with not having a policy? When, in the face of all these facts—because they are facts—I see this accusation repeated over and over again that the Tory

party have no policy, I own I grow very impatient and very indignant. I do not much mind so long as it is confined to the ranks of our opponents, as I am not surprised at anything that comes from them, but when a man like Mr. Bartley, of great experience and knowledge, joins in what I can only call a parrot-cry, then I own I am shocked. I do not think Mr. Bartley, in making that accusation which he did the other day, can have studied the history of the Tory party in the past year or the acts of the Opposition in the last three years; and even if Mr. Bartley was right, I maintain that he would not have been justified in sustaining and supporting that cry at the present moment. Mr. Bartley may say to me, "Well, you are the last person who ought to rebuke me, because you wrote letters about the Tory party to the *Times* a short time ago." So I did; but the situation then was widely different. I wrote those letters criticizing the management of the Tory party and the state of things in that party in the year 1882, when there was no prospect of a general election, and when no great difficulties and no great dangers surrounded or hung over our party or our country. That was eminently a time for criticism; but the year 1885 is not the time for criticism. I am of opinion that since the year 1882 there has been a great and beneficial change in the action of the Opposition. You have had since the year 1882 a very active and a very aggressive Opposition—an Opposition which has moved in the House of Commons no less than six separate votes of censure since that time, which has very nearly carried one or two of them, and which has not seriously been defeated on any one of them. But I maintain that Mr. Bartley in his accusation that the Tory party have no policy is hopelessly wrong. The policy of the Tory party is twofold; it is, in the first place, to expose, by persistent repetition and untiring reiteration, the difficulties into which the Liberal party have plunged the people of England, and the nature and the cause of these difficulties. That policy can only be carried out by united action and by individual energy.

REITERATION.

I daresay any one of you is at times more or less called upon to address your fellow-countrymen on political

subjects. Do not mind saying a thing over and over again. Say it everywhere and say it to everybody. Recall it on all occasions. Recall everything connected with Ireland, with South Africa, with Egypt, and with Afghanistan. Recall the Kilmainham treaty. Recall the disaster of Majuba Hill, and the terrible consequences of that disaster. Recall the murder of General Gordon. Recall the surrender to Russia of the territory of your Afghan ally. Do not be afraid about repeating the same thing. The people will not get tired of hearing it, as I know from my own experience, which is getting pretty extensive. The Liberals will be very angry with you, because they are of opinion that those days have been forgotten. But I say they have not been forgotten, and I say they shall not be condoned. At any rate, it is in that way only you can clear yourselves and your party from the responsibility of national disaster, and it is the only way that the Tory party can continue its reputation untarnished and undiminished.

TORY POLICY.

I said that the policy of the Tory party was twofold. In the first place its policy is to expose the errors of our opponents ; and in the second place to direct attention to the results of those errors. Now, the second part of the policy of the Tory party can be easily ascertained. The policy of the Tory party in power is historic and traditionary. It is the policy of Mr. Pitt, of Mr. Canning, of Sir Robert Peel, and it is the policy of Lord Beaconsfield. Some of you might possibly wish to inquire, How would the domestic and Imperial policy of the Tory party, as taught to us by those great men, apply now if the Tory party were placed in power? Well, let us look at Ireland. What was the policy of Mr. Pitt in Ireland? The policy of Mr. Pitt in Ireland was the construction of the Union between Ireland and Great Britain. The policy of the Tory party at the present day would be the maintenance of the Union between Great Britain and Ireland, and a resolute opposition to any attempts, no matter how specious might be the garb in which they were disguised, which would in any way impair the perpetuity or solidarity of the Union. What was the policy of Sir Robert Peel in Ireland? The policy of Peel

was to develop the material and natural resources of Ireland, and, at the same time, by a large system of State-aided education, to diffuse knowledge among the Irish people. That, undoubtedly, was the policy which the Government of Lord Beaconsfield pursued during some five years with much success—a policy which was combined with firm, consistent, but by no means irritating administration, relying almost entirely upon the ordinary law; and if it had not been for causes beyond the control of Ministries, if it had not been for the severity of the Irish famine, and for the change of Government in the year 1880—of this there can be no doubt whatever—that the state of Ireland at the present moment would have been in the highest degree bright and promising. And for my own part I have no doubt at all that it is only by a speedy return to the continuous, consistent, and intelligible policy of Mr. Pitt and of Sir Robert Peel and of Lord Beaconsfield in Ireland that you can have the smallest or the faintest hope of securing the maintenance of the Union and the happiness of the Irish people. The domestic, or rather the internal, policy of the Tory party would, I feel certain, follow the lines laid down by those great men. The policy of Mr. Gladstone has had for its effect, and for all I know has been purposely directed, towards handing over British commerce and British manufacture almost entirely into the hands of the foreigner. The policy of the Tory party, if they were placed in power at the next election, would be by a very close and careful inquiry into the nature, the extent, and the causes of the present unexampled depression in trade, and by the comprehensive revision of our present fiscal and revenue arrangements, to restore to the working classes that commercial and manufacturing predominance which was of old their mainstay and their pride. As regards national finance, there is no doubt whatever that if the Tory party were placed in a position which would enable it to command a majority in the House of Commons by the results of the next election, the Tory party would have to do over again the work of Sir Robert Peel. They would have to set on foot, and I make no doubt that they would set on foot, a thorough and exhaustive investigation by the House of Commons of the expenditure and the management of every Government department. With this inevitable result,

that they would effect a vigorous retrenchment combined with practical administrative efficiency. That is a very large work ; it is a work which if neglected, if not taken in hand immediately by a new Parliament while it is young and while it is vigorous, will seriously, and perhaps irreparably, damage your financial resources.

PARLIAMENTARY PROCEDURE.

But there is another matter closely connected with this work, and that is the reform of Parliamentary procedure. Mr. Gladstone has tried his hand at a reform of Parliamentary procedure, and his efforts have been abortive, and why ? Because they were conceived in a party spirit and directed solely to party aims. There will without doubt have to be another consideration by the House of Commons of its procedure. I would not have time, nor would you have the patience, to go into that matter to-night, and I will merely hint that the form that such Parliamentary reform and procedure must take must be in the direction of a large alteration in the hours of business in the House of Commons—meeting much earlier in the day and rising much earlier in the evening. Because if we do not attempt some reform of that kind, not only will your business be badly done, but you will run the risk of shortening the lives and crippling the constitution of the best of your public men. In the second place there must be a reform of the House, which should hand over to Committees many of the intricate matters the House itself now deals with.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT.

Then as to legislation, I imagine that the policy of the Tory party as regards legislation would be to propose a very large scheme of reform of local government, not only in Ireland, but in England, and also in the metropolis. That should be a reform based upon a popular foundation ; it should give over to local bodies considerable financial resources, and upon them should devolve much of the local work which is now unfortunately left to the House of Commons to perform. I do not believe that there is any party in the country which can do this work so well as the Tory party, because the members of the Tory party have

had more practical experience of local government for many years past than the members of the Liberal party, and you may be certain that they will deal more tenderly, more prudently, and more safely with ancient institutions, the merits of which have been ascertained and distinctly valued. Well, gentlemen, that would be an enormous work, it would without doubt absorb the time of an entire Parliament.

INDIA.

I do not care to extend the programme. I do not wish to over-estimate or to over-fill the measure of the capacity of the new Parliament. But combined with that there ought to be, and I think there must be, a real and comprehensive Parliamentary inquiry into the whole operation of the government of India. That is a matter which has been too long postponed. The Government of India is a despotic Government, and, like all despotic Governments, it must inevitably contract to itself political diseases and political defects, which only the investigation of a popular Chamber can cure or mitigate. The Government of India has never been a party question, and it is a matter in which both parties can combine. All I can say is this, that a Parliamentary inquiry into the operation of the Act which gave over to the Crown the government of India is an effectual and effective part of the policy now so absolutely essential to strengthening the British hold upon India.

TORY POLICY IN EGYPT.

Now, with regard to the policy of the Tory party in respect to its relations with foreign Powers. You may ask what would the Tory party do if it were placed in power to-morrow with Egypt. I cannot refrain from reiterating the opinion which I expressed more than two years ago—I wish we had never gone to Egypt. We should, I am sure, adopt the policy of Mr. Canning, and have favoured and fostered by our might the growth of Egyptian nationality and Egyptian liberty. But, after all, these are vain and idle regrets. You must deal with the situation as you find it, and the policy which was at one time possible is perfectly impossible in 1885. The policy of Her Majesty's Government and the Liberal party in regard to Egypt is, without any doubt whatever, a policy of precipitate departure, or what is known

as "stewing in their own juice." I am certain that the policy of the Tory party would be to reverse that. We have contracted tremendous obligations by our conduct in Egypt—obligations which are due to Egypt and to Europe—and you must fully discharge those obligations or you must sacrifice your position as a great European Power. Now, the policy of the Tory party would be, I feel confident, to accentuate the British position and to confirm the British predominance in Egypt, and at the same time simultaneously to re-establish the most friendly and intimate relations with the Sultan of Turkey, who is at the head of the Mahommedan nations of the world. It is only in that latter way that the policy of British predominance in Egypt can be effectually or safely carried out. Now what I wish to point out to you is this—that the policy of British predominance in Egypt, which in 1882 may have been a matter of argument, is now absolutely essential, because the security of India has been by very recent events most seriously menaced, and because the keeping of an uninterrupted communication with India is essentially vital. Then, as to Central Asia and the Russian advance, and the frontier of India and Afghanistan, what would be the policy of the Tory party if you placed them in power?

CENTRAL ASIA.

The policy of the Tory party would depend, I imagine, on the exact moment at which they were placed in power, because events march very quickly, and the past cannot be recalled. If the Tory party were placed in power to-morrow they would succeed to a situation gravely compromised. They would find that the word of England and the word of the Queen had been pledged, and that positions of incalculable military and strategic importance had been irrevocably ceded to Russia. That would be a position which they could not deal with, but of this I am sure—you may be perfectly certain that if the Tory party were placed in power to-morrow the Russians would advance no further. The Tory party, and the leaders of the Tory party, would be neither cajoled, nor deceived, nor frightened; they would be ready, for the security of India, to face any responsibility, and they would preserve peace, and they would gain ample time for making the North-

west frontier of India, humanly speaking, absolutely impregnable against any Russian army.

THE REAL PEACE, REFORM, AND RETRENCHMENT PARTY.

I have, I think you will admit—I fear at too great length—gone through every principal question of foreign and domestic policy. I do not know that I have shirked anything or evaded anything. What does Mr. Bartley want more. If he wants more I fear that he is a man of a discontented mind. Of course I recognize well that I speak with no official authority whatever, with nothing more than the authority which must appertain to any member of Parliament who has for some years studied the course of public affairs, and who has closely learnt the history of his party, ancient and modern. It has been my good fortune at various times to be brought into close conflict with the recognized leaders of the Tory party; it has been my evil fortune to be brought at other times into sharp conflict with the leaders of that party; but that very fact has given me, I think, exceptional opportunities for gathering their minds and for gathering the mind of the Tory party in Parliament on the great questions of Imperial and domestic policy, and I do not believe that in what I have said to you to-night I have said a single word which would be repugnant either to the leaders or the members of the Tory party, or which would be seriously disagreed with or disavowed by one or by the other. And I venture also to think that, from the extremely kind and encouraging hearing which you have given to me, I have set forth a policy, domestic and foreign, which is agreeable and intelligible to yourselves. In conclusion, I will only say this—I have every reasonable hope of the result of the next general election. We need not for one moment fear the taunts and the accusations which are flung against us so freely by the Radical party that we are a party of privilege and worn out anomaly, and that we do not trust the people. We are the party who passed the Reform Act of 1867. We are the party who have taken a large and honourable share in the passing of the Reform Act of 1884 and in the Redistribution Act of 1885. We are the party who have obtained for the Tower Hamlets seven representatives. I say that all the taunts and accusations such as I have referred to, flung at us by the Radical

party, fall off blunt and harmless against the impenetrable shield of historic fact and recorded action. We are the real peace party ; the real reform party ; the real retrenchment party. Our opponents are nothing more than shams and impostors and humbugs—proved to be so, not by my assertion, but by the last five years of Parliamentary paralysis, constant and fruitless wars, and national degradation and chaos. We are a united party. We are united individually, collectively, and politically ; we are separated by no personal jealousies ; we are separated by no difference of political opinion. Our opponents are and have been all along hopelessly divided, and the moment that Mr. Gladstone thinks it convenient or necessary to seek needful and well-merited repose, the moment his strong, controlling hand is withdrawn from the Liberal party, that moment the Liberal party will be shattered, like Afghan tribes, into fifty discordant and mutually destructive factions. It is not possible, it cannot be in the nature of things, that the government of the British Empire will remain in hands such as those. It is under those circumstances and at such a moment, with every reasonable hope, and with every bright anticipation that I ask you to drink with more than usual enthusiasm and zeal the toast of the Conservative cause.

THOUGHT AND ACTION.

(AT CAMBRIDGE, JUNE 7, 1885.)

How can I adequately respond to the extreme cordiality which you have given to the proposal of this toast, and how can I adequately represent to you my sense of the honour you have done me in electing me to the presidency of the University Carlton Club? I do not know. I feel I must leave it to your imagination, and that your imagination cannot possibly go too far in defining the depths of my feelings on this occasion. I cannot but be extremely sensible of the honourable nature of the post of president of this club, on the rolls of which are inscribed so many names illustrious in the great University of Cambridge. I wish I knew better

how to appreciate the responsibility of the post, and I wish I could in any degree adequately discharge its duties.

AN INTERESTING AND MEMORABLE INCIDENT.

It may not be uninteresting to many of you to know that the Cambridge Carlton had a very remarkable effect on my own political career, whatever it is and such as it has been. There was a time last year when it happened to me to be engaged in something partaking of the nature of a struggle—at any rate in a difference of opinion—with men of great position, great responsibility, and great experience, as to the form which modern Conservative political organization ought to take. Well, that difference of opinion at one time became very sharp, and I did not know what the result of it might be; and I was getting extremely anxious, more for the sake of the Conservative party than for my own sake. But this matter had attracted a great deal of public attention, and one evening I came home from the House of Commons very anxious and rather discouraged, because at the House of Commons, among people whom I ought to look upon as my political friends, I had met nothing but gloomy looks, and I felt very much inclined to retire from the game, thinking I was doing more harm than good, and rather—to use a slang expression—cut the whole concern. However, when I arrived at my house I found there waiting for me a deputation from the University Carlton. Three gentlemen—three, I will venture to say, of the most accomplished and able envoys ever sent out on any mission—were waiting for me; and the only error which they committed—and it was a very serious error—was that, instead of going into my house and waiting for me there, with whatever accommodation that dwelling might afford, they waited for me in the street, and had been waiting for me some time. And they conveyed to me an expression of entire sympathy and agreement from this club with the views which I had then put forth, and they invited me to a banquet to be held in this town under the auspices of this club. I do not think you can imagine the effect that expression of sympathy and that cordial invitation had upon me at the time. Before I received it I felt that I was very young, very inexperienced, and very much alone, and I did not know to what extent any portion

or fraction of public opinion might be with me. But the expression of opinion from your club filled me with hopes that after all I was not going so very far wrong, that I might still persevere a little longer; and though I was not able at that time to come to the banquet, to which I was invited, still I did persevere; everything came all right, everything settled down, both to the harmony, and, I think, to the advantage of the Tory party. That was to my mind, as far as I was concerned, and must always be, a most interesting and memorable incident. It was an encouragement from youth to youth.

NOTHING BUT PITY.

I myself can never fail to take the deepest and most abiding interest in the fortunes of the University Carlton. I cannot say how glad I am that we should meet together at last, and make each other's mutual acquaintance. When I arrived at Brindisi in April, on my return from India, the only letter which met me from Europe was an invitation from this club to become its president, and to attend the annual dinner. I knew that it would be my duty and my pleasure to obey that invitation, but as the time of the dinner drew near, I thought to myself, "What on earth am I going to say at the dinner?" because I knew from experience that a University audience is perhaps the most critical any political audience could possibly be. I thought that the ordinary topics, not to say the commonplaces of party controversy, would be inappropriate to the concentrated essence of intelligence which I see before me, although it is undoubtedly very important at all times to explain, and to enlarge, and, indeed, to repeat the nature of the differences which exist between the Conservative and the Liberal party, particularly as regards the present state of things. Still, if I were to take up your time this evening by bringing up the case which the Conservative party have against Her Majesty's Government, I feel that I should be imitating the action of the man who carried coals to Newcastle. I have no doubt that on that subject you can tell me a great deal more than I can tell you. Besides which, really, as regards the position of the Government at the present moment, it is such an intensely wretched position that they have altogether passed

beyond the scope of blame. No one, not even their worst enemy, can feel anything for them but intense pity. My own feelings with regard to them are precisely similar to my feelings when I read in the paper of some criminal condemned to death. I imagine one would more appropriately address them as the Judge is generally supposed to address the convict who has been condemned to death : " Unfortunate man, I do not wish by any words of mine to add to the agony of your last moments." I thought, therefore, that whatever happened, I at any rate ought to try to direct your attention to some subject a little less commonplace, and suggest respectfully to your consideration some subject or other not usually brought up at political gatherings.

THE LIFE OF AN M.P.

I was thinking over this, and it suddenly occurred to me how very little time the ordinary politician has for political thought. An English politician of the present day lives in such a giddy hurly-burly of events, incidents flash before his mind with such dazzling rapidity of cause and consequence, and he has at the same time to deal with such a complexity, such a heterogeneous mass of business, that as for sitting down quietly to think out, and getting to the bottom of any grave political situation—as you would sit down to study a problem of chess—such a process is out of the question and almost impossible. Now, what is the nature of the life of an ordinary member of Parliament? He has to fly up to the House of Commons, and from the House of Commons he has to fly down to a public meeting, at which public meeting he is supposed and expected to discuss an illimitable range of every British interest, and the course of the Government as regards those interests, and, of course, expected to ornament his discourse by every variety of vituperation. And having done this, he is again obliged to fly back to the House of Commons, and there perhaps take part, either by voting or speaking, on some most difficult or complicated question, brimming over with serious results, either to himself personally or his party. Besides that, he has more or less—and generally I fear less rather than more—to digest and assimilate an immense quantity of newspaper and periodical literature, and he has to deal with an enormous mass of correspondence, because the great feature of

the present day is not only the *cacoethes loquendi*, but also the *cacoethes scribendi*, and there are many people now-a-days who take a great interest in politics, and everybody who takes a great interest in politics always thinks it necessary, from time to time, to write voluminously, generally in very imperfect caligraphy, to his own particular friend in the House of Commons, for whom he happens to have a fancy. That is the nature of the duties of an ordinary member of Parliament. And what must be the nature of the duties of a Minister, who, in addition to all that, has to think of the business of his department, and the condition of his Government, and the prospects of his party? Now, in such a state of things, how can you expect, on any subject, anything like political thought? How can you expect your Government or your public men to avoid blunders? How can you expect the statesmanship of men like Lord Grey, or men like Lord John Russell, or Sir Robert Peel, or Mr. Canning, or even, of later years, Lord Beaconsfield? I do not believe that any of these great statesmen whom I have named, in the whole course of their career, attended half a dozen of those public meetings of the nature which some of us have to attend every week or every month. Cabinet Councils were very few, the House of Commons rarely sat late, and the sessions were comparatively short, so that these great men had ample time to devote their great abilities to the deep consideration of the affairs of their country. Yet you had blunders then, and governments came to grief; and if that was the state of things then, what can you expect now?

NO TIME FOR THOUGHT.

This is essentially an age of action. It does not appear to me to be an age of thought. I doubt very much whether if Adam Smith or even Mr. John Stuart Mill had lived in these days they would have been able to produce the works which they did produce. Railways and telegraphs, the steam printing-machine, and shorthand writing have done their best to kill political thought. It is essentially an age of action, but action based rather on instinct than on logic or reason or experience. Look how very suddenly things occur, how very little anything is foreseen, and how very rapidly every-

thing is forgotten. Take even such instances as the death of General Gordon or the battle of Penjdeh, or even the Vote of Credit and Mr. Gladstone's great war speech. These are events which caused intense and immeasurable excitement at the moment. That excitement lasted for about twenty-four hours, everybody chattered to everybody about that particular subject for that space of time, and then it was decently interred, for all practical political purposes, in the political cemetery of utter oblivion. Now, I do not think this at all an exaggerated or untrue picture of the manner in which we conduct our government and our political affairs ; and yet it is a very serious consideration. Yet, strange to say, I suppose there never was a time in the history of England when profound political thought and prolonged political study were more essential to the interests of England. The process of government has never approached even the nature of an exact science. It has always been purely empiric, and still continues to be so ; and yet the difficulties of government now grow greater and greater every day, and experience seems to become less useful. I suppose there is not a man in England more experienced in the public service—I doubt whether there has ever been a man of greater experience in the public service—than Mr. Gladstone ; and yet look at the extraordinary ill-luck, to put it in the mildest way, which has attended his Government every single day. Now, there are a great many people—I daresay there are people in this University—who will tell you that if you want to be able to judge the present and forecast the future you must study history. Well, I apprehend that the study of history in our present case is almost useless. The study of history to the Russian politician is very useful, because it will tell him what must be the inevitable and speedy end of a grinding and cruel despotism. The study of history to the German may be useful, because it will tell him that a military oligarchy acting under the semblance of a constitutional form is a political system of ephemeral duration. The study of history to the Frenchman is useful, because it will tell him that the transition from a Republic to absolute and irresponsible power in one man is alike easy and regular. But in our case the study of history to an English politician affords very little guide whatever, because

the state of things you have to deal with in England at the present moment is unparalleled in history.

HOW WILL IT END?

Now, what are the duties of the English Government at the present moment? They have to provide for the security and, as best they can, to minister to the happiness of some 300 millions or more of human beings, and these 300 millions are scattered in every quarter of the world, and they comprise every imaginable variety of the human race and of custom, every variety of religion and every form and species of language and dialect. Now, what is the nature of the Government which has to discharge these extraordinary and unparalleled duties? You have an hereditary monarchy, exercising an immense influence indirectly, but hardly any influence directly, almost precisely the reverse of what was the nature of hereditary monarchy 200 years ago. You have an hereditary Chamber exercising direct executive and legislative powers; and you have a representative Chamber, controlling the other two, and seeking to acquire, and gradually acquiring, into its own hands almost all the executive and legislative power. All these three institutions are institutions of extremely ancient origin, and they are all institutions intensely conservative in their constitution and their procedure. Because, mind you, if the House of Commons were to be elected in November, and were to be composed almost entirely of the Radical party, still you may take it for certain that the spirit and the procedure of that House would be intensely conservative. Now, what is the foundation of this very curious and ancient structure? The foundation is totally new, purely modern, absolutely untied. You have changed the old foundation. You have gone to a new foundation. Your new foundation is a great, seething, and swaying mass of five million electors, who have it in their power, if they should so please, by the mere heave of the shoulders, if they only act moderately unanimously, to wipe away entirely the three ancient institutions which I have described, and put anything they like in their place, and to profoundly alter, and perhaps for a time altogether ruin, the interests of the 300 million beings who are committed to their charge. That is, I say, a state of things unparalleled in history. And how do you think it will all end? Are we being swept

along a turbulent and irresistible torrent which is bearing us towards some political Niagara, in which every mortal thing we now know will be twisted and smashed beyond all recognition? Or are we, on the other hand, gliding passively along a quiet river of human progress that will lead us to some undiscovered ocean of almost superhuman development? Who can tell? Is it not, gentlemen, an age—is not this a moment when political thought, and deep political thought, is necessary? To what extent do you think these five million electors will be controlled or influenced by law or custom, by religion or by reason? Now, I can understand—it is not difficult to understand—that five million people may govern themselves with more or less success; but to what extent will these five million people be able to control and direct the destinies, and in what manner will they do so, of the 300 millions whom they have in their power; and to what extent will the five million electors refrain from the ordinary human influences of passion and caprice? This is a problem totally new. It is a problem upon which history throws no light whatever, and moreover it is a problem which comes at a time when the persons who are chiefly responsible for the government of our country are precluded by the very circumstances of their life from giving it the deep attention which it absolutely requires.

A SOURCE OF SALVATION.

Now, I believe that a club like yours can give an enormous assistance in this direction. You are not yet drawn into that political machine which kills thought and stifles reflection. I dare say many of whom I see before me soon will be, but some of you perhaps may not. At any rate, all I would say to you, filling the honourable position of president to which you have so kindly elected me, is to give time while you have time to political thought, and to the present consideration of these and analogous questions which I have tried to set before you. Discuss them and write about them, and lecture about them, and endeavour, in your respective spheres to stimulate also political thought among the masses of your fellow-countrymen. But you can do more than this, because, by able summaries of statistical information, by precise investigation into sharply opposing arguments, and by original conclusions, all

put together in an agreeable and attractive literary form, you may be able to do much to restrain politicians from acting hastily and heedlessly at critical moments and upon important subjects. I do not know if it would be saying much that would be disagreeable to you to hear, but I may say that in all probability you possess enormous advantages for this task. You represent the most perfect centre of higher education, practical and theoretical, which any country can show. You possess mental powers at the present moment in their highest degree of energetic efficiency. Because, depend upon it, that the mental powers of a man at twenty-one for getting at the bottom of any very difficult question, or for arriving at the truth on any much-contested subject, are worth double and treble the mental powers of a man of thirty-five or forty, who, harassed and exhausted by ten or fifteen years of active political life, and by the circumstances of that life, is precluded from giving to the subject the concentrated attention you can do. Do you suppose that a man at thirty-five or forty could go in for the higher mathematics of this University with any chance of success? Why, he would be mad; every undergraduate in the schools would beat him hollow. And yet the difficulties of these extraordinary problems of higher mathematics are as nothing compared with the mystery, darkness, and confusion that surrounds some of our great political questions at the present day, I am quite certain that it is impossible for any of you to over-estimate the benefits you can confer upon society and your country generally by devoting and applying your best energies to the development and popularization of high and deep political thought.

ABOUT PROFESSORS.

If I am not wearying you, I should like to illustrate the thoughtlessness of modern politicians, and curiously enough I find my best illustrations of that among the Radical party. I find an instance of thoughtlessness in a certain professor; and perhaps I may first, as a digression, say a word about professors. Professors are admirable persons as long as they strictly confine themselves to the subject in which they profess, but it is a curious and inexplicable circumstance that, as a general rule, the

moment a professor—I am speaking only of Radical professors—quits that subject, he becomes unfortunate and of no account. At his best in politics he is a poor creature, and at his worst he is a creature of infinite contemptibility. However, I want to make two great exceptions to that rule which I have laid down about Radical professors, two great exceptions that I personally am acquainted with. One was undoubtedly the case of the professor who was beloved by both parties in the House of Commons, and also widely throughout the country, and whose loss is greatly to be deplored—a man who was also an ornament of this University of Cambridge—I mean Professor Fawcett. The other exception is a gentleman whom I am happy to say is still alive, and I hope in good health. He, also, is a great ornament of the House of Commons for his historical knowledge, and also, I think, an ornament of Cambridge. I allude to Professor Sir William Harcourt. But the cases of these two professors merely prove the substantial accuracy of my proposition, because the great merit of these two gentlemen was that they were politicians long before they were professors. I mean that they put politics far above the sphere of what they professed; and, curiously enough, Sir William Harcourt carries that to such an extent that I am told his political avocations leave him no time whatever to deliver his long-anticipated professorial lectures. However, now let us look at the other professors. I am happy to say that we have not got a single professor in the Conservative party in the House of Commons, and that is why we are so intellectual and alert. But the Radical party have several professors. There is Professor Bryce and Professor Roundell—perfectly harmless, but perfectly useless. Then there is Professor Sir Lyon Playfair, a man possessing an extraordinary fund of scientific information, and able to impart that information very agreeably. But the moment Professor Sir Lyon Playfair was placed in a position in which he had to do practical work, Professor Sir Lyon Playfair came to grief.

“NOTHING MORE OBJECTIONABLE THAN VIOLENT LANGUAGE.”

Then there is Professor Thorold Rogers, a man distinguished by nothing and for nothing except the violence

of his language, and there is nothing more objectionable than violent language. Now, Professor Thorold Rogers, the moment he came to mix in the practical business of life, also came to grief; because I observe he presided over a company formed to develop an American mine, and he and his co-directors extracted thousands from the pockets of the innocent British public. Well, only the other day the innocent professor had to go to the shareholders and state that in the innocence of his professorial heart he had been completely taken in by the cute Yankee, and the whole of this wonderful mine was, to use his own language, a gigantic swindle. That is only an instance of the modern professor. And now I come to another, and I am going to show the thoughtlessness of professors. I come to that professor who is more or less identified with this University, and whom your respected member, Mr. Raikes, defeated in his attempt upon the representation of Cambridge University. I mean Professor Stuart. What was the proposition which he gravely stated to the House of Commons the other day? What was the thoughtless proposition that he put before Parliament? He was dealing with the large question of the franchise, and he said the most ignorant agricultural labourer in the West of England, or the miner who, by the hard exigencies of his avocation, is forced to spend either all his day or night at the bottom of the pit, is more qualified, more thoroughly competent, and more reliable to give a sound and wise opinion upon such a question as, say, the Russian policy in Central Asia, or such a question as, say, financial tariff and revenue reform—more competent than the cleverest and most enlightened undergraduate who may be in or perhaps passed through either the classical or historical or mathematical schools of the great University of Cambridge with every honour he can carry off. That was Professor Stuart's proposition, and he sustained it with a wonderful variety of nonsensical assertions, and was supported by a large number of the Radical party. That is a wonderful instance of thoughtlessness in politicians.

RADICALS THE THOUGHTLESS PARTY.

Now, I will give you a wonderful instance of thoughtlessness on the part of a Radical Minister of the Crown,

Mr. Chamberlain. I believe Mr. Chamberlain was dealing with one of the largest and most difficult political questions of the day, the question of the tenure of land; and this is how he dealt with it. He was commenting upon a very excellent and philanthropic effort made by a great many persons to establish by private enterprise a new tenure of land, and this is what he said:—"Why, dukes and earls have met in Willis's Rooms to announce their sympathy with the agricultural labourer. The old band of reactionaries and impossible politicians have agreed in an experiment which under such auspices I venture to say is predoomed to failure." "The old band of reactionaries and impossible politicians!" Well, I thought I would look at the names of the gentlemen he so described, and what did I find? I found first and foremost among this "old band" was the Duke of Argyll, then came the Duke of Westminster, Lord de Vesci, Lord Thurlow, Lord Bramwell, Lord Monteagle, Lord Arthur Russell, Lord Ebrington, Lord William Compton—all admirable hereditary Whigs, and they are put down as "reactionaries and impossible politicians." I go on and find the names of Mr. Goschen, Sir George Campbell, Mr. Albert Grey, Mr. W. Fowler, Professor Thorold Rogers, Mr. Ernest Noel, Mr. Leonard Courtney, Mr. Bryce, Mr. Munro Ferguson, Mr. James Howard, Sir B. Samuelson, Sir Thomas Acland, Mr. Henry Acland, Mr. Samuel Smith, and Mr. Auberon Herbert. This list of names represents, I venture to say, every variety of sound Liberal opinion, and these wretched persons Mr. Chamberlain calls the "old band of reactionaries and impossible politicians," who in dealing with the ancient tenure of land in England were "predoomed to failure." Is not than an extraordinary instance of thoughtlessness on the part of a Radical Minister in dealing with a very great question? If Mr. Chamberlain characterizes these various phases of Liberal opinion as "impossible" and "reactionary," I should like to know how he is going to form his Liberal party, and how in God's name he is going to form a Government. We shall not be going very far wrong if we consider the Radical party to be pre-eminently the thoughtless party in politics. They are going about the country with immense energy and determination, an energy partaking of the nature of the fanaticism of Osman Digna; and they are

spreading and diffusing an enormous amount of arrant trash and falsehood into the ears of the unfortunate agricultural labourer.

STILL HOPE.

But your club and you who are here can do, if you like, an immense work in counteracting that poisonous stuff which they are spreading abroad. Every one of you here, I suppose, represents some portion of the country. Every one of you in your own homes and the part of the country with which you are connected can, if you like, throw yourselves into the electoral struggle, and can assist by your light and by your intelligence to destroy altogether any transitory effect which the Radical stump orator may produce on the agricultural mind. The Tory party is now engaged in waging the greatest struggle perhaps it has ever been called upon to engage in, and although you cannot give it numbers, you can give it what is perhaps worth a great deal more, the weight of cultivated minds and trained intellects. Now, that was the subject which I was rather anxious to draw your attention to. I have shown very cursorily indeed, but in a manner which your own intellects will fill up, the extraordinary, unparalleled, and complicated nature of the political problems with which political parties in England have to deal; and I fairly and frankly confess to you my own incapacity to deal with these problems as I would like to deal with them; and I have asked you on my own behalf and on behalf of other politicians busily engaged for your assistance. At the same time, gentlemen, I do not wish you to suppose for a moment that I am in the least alarmed as to the future. My state of mind when these great problems come across me—which is very rarely—is one of wonder, or perhaps I should rather say of admiration and of hope, because the alternative state of mind would be one of terror and despair. And I am guarded from that latter state of mind by a firm belief in the essential goodness of life, and in the evolution, by some process or other which I do not exactly know and cannot determine, of the higher and nobler humanity. But, above all, my especial safeguard against such a state of mental annihilation and mental despair is my firm belief in the ascertained and much-tried common sense which is the peculiarity of the English people. That

is the faith which I think ought to animate and protect you in your political future ; that is the faith of the Tory democracy in which I shall ever abide ; that is the faith which your club can, and I hope will, widely and wisely propagate ; and that is the faith which, dominating our minds and influencing our actions on all occasions, no matter how dark and gloomy the horizon may appear to be, will contribute to preserve and adapt the institutions of our country and to guarantee and to consolidate the spreading dominions of the Queen.

THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

(AT CRANFORD PARK, DORSETSHIRE, AUGUST 12,
1885.)

I own I am very much surprised at my own courage in appearing before a rural audience, because if one tenth part, if one hundredth part, of the accusations which have been made against me were true you ought to drive me from this platform. For some years past, gentlemen, I have been accused by the Radical party of having insulted the agricultural labourer, of having declared that he was not fit to have a vote. I have been accused of having insulted the people of England and of having called them "scum" and "dregs," and I know not what—and I am sorry to say that also from certain Conservative quarters I have been accused of having disgraced the character and betrayed the interests of the great Tory party. Well, gentlemen, fortunately for me, the English people did not receive these accusations lightly, and they did not accept them readily. They place a very considerable discount on the enthusiastic oratory of Radical speakers ; but my chief justification for appearing before a rural audience is that during the twelve years I have been in Parliament I have represented a borough which is purely agricultural—and the population of which is in the main composed of agricultural labourers. On three occasions I have had to sustain severe contests in that borough, and on every occasion the agricultural labourer of that borough has declared his confidence in me. And on the last occasion, only

some six weeks ago, one of the severest contests was fought against me with the view of preventing me taking my seat in Parliament on accepting office, and though I was not able to go down myself to refute the attack which was made upon me, and though at that time every sort of accusation was freely showered upon me, the answer that the agricultural population of Woodstock made to me was that they returned me to Parliament by a majority of double what I had in 1880. I greatly doubt whether Mr. Chamberlain or Mr. Jesse Collings, who pose now as the ardent friends of the agricultural labourers, can show such a satisfactory record of confidence reposed in them by the rural population.

LORD SPENCER AND LORD RIPON.

The most remarkable feature of the political contest of the present day is the extraordinary licence of accusations which the Radical party permit themselves in speaking of their opponents, and the very narrow limits of criticism within which they desire to confine their opponents when they are speaking of them. I will give you an instance, and an illustration of that. I have been accused of making within recent times what the Radicals term a brutal attack upon the conduct of Lord Spencer, when Viceroy of Ireland, and I have been accused of making a ferocious and a savage attack upon Lord Ripon, the late Viceroy of India. But what are the facts of the case? What were the words I used with reference to the late Viceroy of Ireland? What I said was that from my own knowledge of Ireland, and from having watched with the utmost attention the history of the country in recent years, I had no confidence in the methods of administration that were resorted to by Lord Spencer, and said further that I should be sorry to see the Tory party going out of their way to assume the responsibility for these methods, and that I should be sorry to see them unnecessarily identifying themselves with the peculiar legislation which Lord Spencer thought necessary for the government of Ireland. That may have been right or may have been wrong, but it is not very unnatural that a member of the Tory party should express his total want of confidence in a member of the Whig party. But whether I was right or whether I was wrong, I submit that what I said was a fair and a reasonable and a moderate commentary with regard

to a difference of political opinion—and I think that it is in no way liable to the epithet of being a brutal attack. Again, I pointed out that Lord Ripon during his Viceroyship of India had squandered the financial resources of that country and by his procrastination and short-sighted policy had invited the Russians to take possession of the territory of Afghanistan, and that by that policy a very heavy and grievous burden had been placed upon the people of India; and again I said that for that policy the Tory Government repudiated all responsibility. Well, there again I may have been right or I may have been wrong. I should like to point out that although Lord Hartington, after I had spoken, pledged Lord Ripon to make a reply in the House of Lords to my statement, Lord Ripon has not ventured to put in an appearance and he has not given a sign of life. I imagine, therefore, that on this subject Lord Ripon thinks that the least said the soonest mended. However, whether my remarks were right or wrong, I submit that they were neither ferocious nor savage, and that it is ridiculous to say that they were.

“DON'T CARE A RAP.”

Well, so much for my accusations against the leader and principal members of the late Government. But now let me examine with your assistance accusations which the Radical party permit themselves to bring against their opponents. Now, I say nothing, gentlemen, about the yelping and piping and the screaming of the small fry of the Liberal party, like Mr. Herbert Gladstone. They are utterly beneath contempt, but I would draw your attention rather to more respectable organs of the Liberal opinion, and for that purpose I take the London *Daily News*. The London *Daily News* is a grave and serious paper. It is a faithful organ of the Liberal party. In its articles it gives a very accurate reflection of Liberal thoughts and Liberal speeches. It is quite true that it is a Radical paper, but at the same time it is a highly-respectable paper. Well, that journal has always held me up to the present day as being an incompetent idiot. The other day the London *Daily News* wrote an article for the purpose of proving that I was unprincipled and the most abandoned and most profoundly wicked politician that ever existed since the days of Machiavelli. That is what the *Daily News* said. It said

that I had opposed the renewal of coercion in Ireland because I wanted this country to go to war with Russia, because I thought that policy would be popular in England ; in other words, that a policy of that kind would gain a few thousand votes for the Conservative party at the general election. Well, what does that come to? What does that accusation mean? I ask your attention to this. The Crimean War, which was the last war with Russia, cost the lives of 100,000 human beings. If we were to go to war with Russia for the possession of India it is doubtful whether that war would be confined to Asia or the two Powers of Great Britain and Russia. It is more than probable that a war of that kind might have lost the lives of 250,000 human beings, so that the accusation of the *Daily News*—a most respectable journal, a model of journalistic propriety, a paper that was so shocked at my criticism of Lord Spencer and Lord Ripon—the accusation of this model organ comes to this, that I would gladly risk, gladly sacrifice, the lives of 250,000 human beings in order to gain a few thousand votes at the general election. Well, that is a pleasant accusation to have made against any one. Suppose I had made an accusation of that kind against any member of the Liberal party—would not there have been a howl, would not there have been a chorus of denunciation? And yet that is the license, the shocking license, which Liberal organs of respectability and repute permit themselves when they criticize their Tory opponents. Well, I do not care one rap what the *Daily News* says, or what the *Standard* says. Water does not run more easily off the back of a duck than the criticisms of the Metropolitan Press upon my political actions. But I bring before you that extraordinary accusation in order to demonstrate to you as forcibly as I can the extravagance and wicked libels which Radical leaders of respectability permit themselves to bring against the character of their political opponents, and it is in order to put you upon your guard against the statements of Radical orators that I mention these things. I know that Mr. Schnadhorst is covering the country with a mob of hired Radical stump orators, and if these are the accusations which are made by the leaders of the Liberal party, what kind of falsehood and misrepresentation and fabrication may you not expect from the stump orators?

A RADICAL LIE.

I now pass to another subject, and their favourite Radical lie. I have heard from many quarters that the emissaries of the Radical party are spreading about all over England that the Tory Government and the Tory party wish to put a tax upon the food of the people. Well, all I can say is this—and you must take my word for what it is worth—that there is not a member of the present Government who would not recoil with the utmost horror from any policy which might in any way raise the price of the necessaries of life to the people of this country. But gentlemen, who are the people who bring this accusation against the Tory party, that we wish to tax the food of the people? It is the very party whom we turned out of office because they attempted to tax the food of the people themselves. What was the subject on which we defeated the late Government? We defeated the late Government on an attempt to place a heavy tax on beer, and I hold that that great national drink, which sustains the powers and reinvigorates in times of weariness and exhaustion our labouring population, is quite as much the food of the people as the bread which the Radicals accuse the Tory party of wishing to tax. Well, we defeated the late Government, and we turned them out of office because they tried to tax the food of the people. And I pray you to remember this—that if you place the Liberal party in power at the next election you must be prepared to bear and to put up with a very heavy tax upon a very essential portion of the national food.

HOW THE FRANCHISE BILL WAS BROUGHT IN.

If I am not wearying you too much I will pass to another question. I know quite well that the Radical party are going about all over the country, and they are calling upon the rural population to support their principles because they say they have passed a great Reform Bill. Well, even if the argument was correct I should deny that that gave them any special title to the confidence of the people. The fact that a political party has passed a political measure does not prove that that party will be able to govern the country wisely and judiciously. You had an illustration of that in the Government of Lord Grey. The Government of Lord

Grey passed the great Reform Bill of 1832, but that Government in its treatment of Ireland and other questions was so unfortunate that within three years of the passing of the Reform Bill of 1832 it was placed in a minority by Sir R. Peel. I deny and utterly repudiate the claim of the Radical party to the confidence of the rural population because they passed the Reform Bill. They never passed the Reform Bill. They could have passed the Reform Bill if they liked some five or six years ago. Mr. Trevelyan, Mr. Chamberlain, and Mr. Forster, who now declare that for many years their tender hearts have been torn with anxiety on behalf of the rural population, joined the Government in 1880. The Government at that time possessed control over the House of Commons. Why did they not enfranchise the rural population in 1880? If Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Trevelyan, or Mr. Forster had believed in their principles—if they had really been sincere in their anxiety for the rural population, and for the enfranchisement of a greater number, don't you think they would at once have insisted upon a measure for the further enfranchisement, no matter what the consequences might have been? But that was not at all their line. What they said was this:—"We have managed to upset and overthrow the detested Government of Lord Beaconsfield. We have managed to secure for ourselves comfortable places and the exercise of great power for a period of six years at least. The agricultural labourer has waited some time, and he can very well wait until we want him." That, gentlemen, was the argument which the Radical party used in those days, and of this you may be perfectly certain, that if things had gone well with the Radical party—if the constituencies of England had remained in good humour and had been satisfied with the Gladstone Government, you may be perfectly certain of this that the agricultural labourer might have waited, and might have whistled for his vote. But unfortunately for the Radical party, and most fortunately for the county householder, things did not go well with Mr. Gladstone's Government. On the contrary, one disaster succeeded another; they were most unfortunate in all the subjects they dealt with in Ireland, in South Africa, in Egypt, and in India. They came to great and signal grief, and the Liberal party were consumed and distracted by quarrelling amongst themselves as to who was to blame for the disasters which had come upon it. The time for the

dissolution was drawing near; the Parliament was growing old; the Radical party were dismayed at the prospect. They saw quite well that another disaster was hanging over them similar to that which overtook them in 1874, and then they turned to their old friend the agricultural labourer, and returned to their old love the county householder, and they said, "That's the man for our money. We will doctor the old constituencies who had found us out with the strong infusion of two millions of county householders. We will promise them three acres of land apiece. They probably do not know, or at any rate we hope they do not know, what a muddle we have been getting into for five years, and if we have any luck with this enfranchisement of the county householders we should secure for ourselves another term of office of six years." That was the system resorted to by the Radical party. That was the system of political tactics which they pursued, a system which I think you will admit does more credit to their Parliamentary manœuvring than to their political principles.

THE REAL AUTHORS OF THE REDISTRIBUTION BILL.

The Radical party, gentlemen, were such a miserable set of muddlers that they could not even play their own game. It was a very easy thing to enfranchise two millions of county householders. A few printed sentences on a piece of foolscap, with the Royal assent at the bottom or at the top, was quite enough for that purpose. But when they came to the more difficult task of the redistribution of seats, where the highest constructive political science was absolutely necessary, then our unfortunate Radical friends were all at sea, and at sea they would have remained if it had not been that Lord Salisbury and the Tory party, who saw their little game, and who were not the least afraid of it, came to their rescue, showed them how to play their own game, and lifted the lame Radical dog gently over the stile of Redistribution. The consequence was that, owing entirely to the action of Lord Salisbury and his Tory supporters, the greatest Reform Bill of the day became an accomplished fact, and passed into law with the unanimous assent of both Houses of Parliament. To show you that is not my imagination, but a true statement of facts, I would call your attention to a speech made by one of the ablest

of the Radical party the other day in the London Reform Club, I mean Sir Charles Dilke. He made in that speech three admissions. He admitted that Redistribution was not only the most difficult, but the most essential part of the Reform Bill. He admitted that the Radical party were perfectly impotent to deal with that question, and he admitted further that the plan of the Redistribution of Seats, which is now the law of England, had been the work, and the sole work, of Lord Salisbury and the Tory party. So when these Radical orators go about the country and appeal to you here, telling you that you ought to vote for their man because their party has given you the vote, I would advise you to ask them the simple question why they did not introduce the county household suffrage in 1880; whether the work of Redistribution was not altogether that of the Tory Party; and whether the Radicals were able in the session of 1884, by themselves and on their own principles, to deal with that great subject. Ask them those questions, and I shall be very much surprised if they are not obliged to confess that everything which I have said about the Redistribution Bill is Gospel fact and true. If I were to ask Mr. Trevelyan, who is without exception the most effusive and most gushing politician I have ever known, and who turns his eyes up to heaven and thanks Providence that in 1885 the people of England will be for the first time in their history truly represented, why that desirable consummation was not brought about five years ago, I wonder what his reply would be.

THE RADICAL PARTY AT SEA.

The fact of the matter is, that the unfortunate Radical party are all at sea. They don't know whether they are on their head or their heels. They have seen that detested, and, as they thought, that stupid party turn out of office one of, as they believe, the greatest Governments, and certainly, as they think him, one of the greatest Ministers that the country has ever possessed; and, more than that, they have seen this disaster take place just after that Minister and that Government had succeeded in passing the greatest Reform Bill of our day. More than that, they see that this great Government and the great Minister were overthrown on the one subject of all others of which they

thought they possessed exclusive and peculiar knowledge—the great question of finance. All these things they see, and they cannot understand them. They cannot account for it in any way whatever. But that is not all, gentlemen. Under the greatest Government and the greatest Minister, as they call him, of this or any other generation, they cannot help admitting that things went from bad to worse. Every disaster imaginable in home or foreign or colonial affairs, followed upon disaster. They see that Ireland could only be governed by coercive legislation; that the House of Commons refused to settle down to work, that our foreign policy could only be kept going by wars and votes of credit, and suddenly the Tories come in, those stupid Tories—how, they cannot understand—and there is a great change. Suddenly there comes what Mr. Bright calls a great calm. Ireland is apparently inclined to settle down and occupy herself with her new electoral prospect. The European Powers become, to all appearance, friendly and agreeable; legislation is carried on by the House of Commons with a rapidity and ease which the Radicals in their dreams had never thought of. But, gentlemen, that is not all. For years, you know, the Radical party have taunted the Conservatives with having no policy or programme before them. But now the Radicals are beginning a piteous lament, and want to know who will give them a cry for the general election. One man suggests one thing, and another another; but to find a policy for the Radical party on which they can unite and carry the country is like looking for a needle in a bottle of hay, or trying to square the circle.

A GREAT POLICY.

The party which was never weary of telling the Tories they had no policy are now in Opposition, and find themselves without any policy, and do not know where to look for one; and, more than that, they see that their detested and despised opponents are pursuing a great policy. For, gentlemen, the policy we are pursuing is a great one. It is a policy upon which we shall go to the country. It is a policy which has for its object the strengthening of the Empire at home and abroad. It is a policy by which we hope to give peace once more to Ireland; it is a policy by which we hope to restore security to India; it is a policy by which we mean to create an

efficient and overpowering navy, adequate to the defence of our commerce, our coasts, and our colonies. It is a policy by which we hope to revive trade and industry. It is a policy in which we hope to secure economy by a thorough reform of all the administrative departments and by restoring to the House of Commons control over the national finances, which under the Liberal Administration they have altogether lost. It is quite true, gentlemen, we Tories cannot promise to every county householder, we cannot promise to every agricultural labourer, three acres of land free, like Mr. Jesse Collings is prepared to do. And if that policy of division of property is to be adopted by England, well then England must find some other party than the Tories to carry it out, because it is a policy which is pregnant with disaster and ruin to every class and every interest. But we promise you this—that every man in England who by his industry, by his thrift and by his perseverance, shall have acquired for himself the possession of three or more acres of land, that that man shall remain in possession of that land, that no one shall interfere with him, that he shall enjoy that land as he will, and he shall dispose of it as he pleases. We promise you, gentlemen, nothing but what we know we can perform. The Tory Government promise you efficient administration, which is what you have been without for five years. We promise you good government—we promise a frugal finance, because we know that efficient administration and good government means good times, and that frugal finance means an absence of harassing and over-burdensome taxation, and we know that easy times and easy taxation mean brisk employment and good wages.

AT LAST A GOOD, A WISE, AND A SAFE GOVERNMENT.

That is what I can promise you, gentlemen. I think that after the events of the last five years, if you will cast your minds back, if you will revive in your memories all the troubles and misfortunes and disasters which incessantly marked their course, I think you will admit that the policy which we put forward, and which we shall stick by, is a policy which at any rate compares very favourably and contrasts very agreeably with either Lord Rosebery's old umbrella or Mr. Chamberlain's

general redistribution. Well there is an old fable, a very old fable—I suppose it must be fifteen hundred or two thousand years old—written by a very wise old Greek, who relates the story of an unfortunate, half-starved, and ill-treated dog, who had the good fortune in his wanderings to come across a great piece of meat. He joyfully seized upon the meat, and squatting himself down by a neighbouring river, he proposed to himself for once in a way after a long time to make a good meal; but as he was holding the meat in his mouth he beheld in the waters underneath him, as he thought, the reflection of a much larger, a much fatter and jucier piece of meat, and this foolish dog incontinently dropped his real piece of meat into the water, where it was carried away, and plunged in after the illusory piece of meat which he thought he had seen. I need scarcely tell you that he came to the surface a wiser and a sadder dog, and I have reason to believe he shortly afterwards died. There is a moral in that fable which is not inapplicable to the present state of things. The English people, after five years of trouble, have at last obtained a Government which promises fairly to be a good and a safe and a wise Government. They will have to decide in a few months whether they will keep that Government, or whether they will go back to the old lot who have misled them so grievously. They will have to decide whether, like the dog, they will keep the real piece of meat, or whether they will plunge into the waters of Radicalism after the illusory shadow of Radical promises. That is what they will have to decide, and I cannot help thinking that the English people, with the common sense which has always distinguished them, will prefer the substance of Tory reality to the illusion of Radical promises. In any case, I make no doubt, from what I have seen in the grounds to-day, from the immense gathering which has come together under so many disadvantages of weather and climate—I make no doubt that Dorsetshire will make a wise choice, and that Dorsetshire will adhere to that old party with which for so many years it has been inseparably connected; that it will repudiate those emissaries of Radicalism whose one great political ideal is to defeat the great landed interests, and to scatter and disperse the rural community, and that it will prefer to support and to give a fair and reasonable chance to a Govern-

ment who in a moment of great danger and difficulty, when their Sovereign was deserted and when the country was betrayed, threw themselves without fear into the breach, and endeavoured and tried to do their duty to their country, and tried to do it well.

WORK OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

(AT SHEFFIELD, SEPTEMBER 3, 1885.)

When I recollect how many distinguished men have in this hall on former occasions responded to this toast, I own that I do feel very strongly a desire that your company on the present occasion might have been fortunate enough to secure to respond to this toast a more fortunate and a more authoritative representative of the present Cabinet than myself. I believe that the only superiority which I can claim over the other members of the Government is a superiority connected with the question of age. I have ascertained by careful inquiry that I am, by a good two years at least, the youngest of the Cabinet Ministers, and it is not impossible that that superiority on the ground of age has sometimes been the cause of envy amongst my more elderly colleagues. I could not observe without the profoundest satisfaction the extremely and, I hope I may say, the markedly cordial reception which you gave the toast which Mr. Watson so well proposed. I am aware that there are many present here who do not regard Her Majesty's present Government with the same strong feelings of affection with which I regard them, and therefore I shall not claim for the present Government any other merit than this—it is a merit which I think to some extent justifies your kind reception of this toast—I mean that since the time when they entered upon their office they have not been idle. It is a merit which any Government at the present time may claim—the merit of not being idle. But I think when you recollect the very short time the present Government has been in office, and when you have by your kind indulgence allowed me to show you what the present Government has managed to achieve in that short time,

you will admit that they have a peculiar claim to the merit of not having been idle.

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT.

The political situation when the present Government acceded to office was most remarkable. To some minds it might have been alarming. The financial arrangements for the year had not been decided upon by Parliament, although a late period of the month of June had been reached. The expenditure to be met amounted to a sum of a hundred millions, and to that sum I shall not be transgressing party limits if I apply the adjective appalling. The financial arrangements had to provide for the meeting of a deficiency in the revenue of fifteen millions, and to that deficiency I again in the presence of this company will venture to apply the adjective appalling. Well, it fell to the lot of the present Government to have to deal with that deficiency and that expenditure at a very late period of the year, and they were fortunate enough in their proposals to secure the unanimous assent of the House of Commons. Not only was the financial situation surrounded by difficulties, but the state of legislation was one of almost hopeless arrear. The Parliament in its last session up to the time at which the Government entered office had been unable to do more than to deal with the Bill for the Redistribution of Seats and the Bill in connection with the registration of voters. It would have been easy, it would have been much more comfortable for Her Majesty's Ministers, seeing they had not a majority in Parliament under their guidance, if they had contented themselves with obtaining the assent of Parliament to the estimates of the year, and wound up the session as quickly as they could. But Her Majesty's present Government did not so conceive their duty, and they were successful in obtaining the assent of Parliament to five or six measures of first-class importance, measures which I imagine will be of substantial and immediate benefit to the country, and the passing of which will to a very large extent alleviate the labours of the new Parliament which will shortly come into being. It may be remarked by partisans, such as may perhaps be present in this room, I mean heated partisans, that there is no merit attaching to legislation which is not encountered by opposition ; but I am of opinion that this gather-

ing may more or less agree with me that the fact that legislation does not encounter opposition is no derogation from the merits of that legislation, and we may learn a lesson from the events of the last six weeks, and the Parliament which is no more, and from the proceedings that marked the passing of the great Reform Bill. We may learn this lesson that that legislation is most likely to contribute to the speedy progress and prosperity of our country, most likely to develop the efficiency and most likely to maintain the character of Parliament which does not excite fierce party opposition, and which is rather the outcome of the co-operation of all parties in the State.

IRELAND.

Not only was there a great mass of legislation in arrear, not only was the financial arrangement of the year in confusion, but the state of Ireland was one in which a decision had to be taken by the Executive of a very anxious and responsible character. In deciding to rely upon the ordinary law for the maintenance of order and the security of life and property in Ireland, Her Majesty's Government took a very deliberate and a very grave decision, and without committing myself to any partisan opinion I will venture to say, after the most careful and sustained attention to events in Ireland, I have seen nothing yet which has occurred, nor have I detected any sign of anything likely to occur, which tends in any way to show that the decision of Her Majesty's Government to rely upon the ordinary law in the government of Ireland was in any way an unwise or an unsound decision.

EGYPT.

In addition to these necessities, in addition to these difficulties, you will agree with me that at the time when Her Majesty's Government came into office, the state of foreign affairs was one of extreme anxiety. In Egypt, the negotiations which had been going on for some time for the floating of a great loan for the benefit of the Egyptian financiers had, at the moment we came into office, arrived at absolutely a deadlock, and Egypt practically was within fifty days of bankruptcy when Lord Salisbury went to the Foreign Office. I do not dwell upon the reasons or the causes of these

things. It is not the time or the place, I think, for that. But I will add that it was not without immeasurable relief that these persons, who were intimately acquainted with the state of Egypt, and who knew what the solvency of Egypt really meant, saw that Lord Salisbury, by his policy of skill and tact and judgment, was able so to unite the Powers of Europe, and so to conciliate interests which appeared to conflict with our own, and which, perhaps, in some way did conflict, that within the space of, I think, three weeks after he went to the Foreign Office a great Egyptian loan of nine millions was floated by the celebrated and famous house of Rothschild in a manner most successful and satisfactory to all. By that act of policy all danger of Egyptian bankruptcy has been, I hope, permanently averted.

CENTRAL ASIA.

Not only was the state of foreign affairs connected with Egypt one of the most anxious and complicated nature, not only were our domestic affairs full of anxiety and difficulty, but there was another matter, compared to which the anxieties and difficulties which attended the state of Egypt, and the state of Ireland, and the state of our finances, and the state of our representation, were comparatively as nothing ; and the subject I allude to is the position of affairs in Central Asia with regard to the extension of Russian territory in the direction of Afghanistan. You are no doubt well aware that shortly before the late Government left office an agreement had been come to between Lord Granville, as representing the late Government, and that most able, most accomplished, most cultivated gentleman, M. de Staal, who represents His Imperial Majesty the Czar, by which the oasis of Penjdeh was to be ceded to Russia ; and the pass of Zulficar, which was at the time more or less in the occupation of the Russians, was to be given to the Ameer of Afghanistan. Well, that was an arrangement which had been come to between the Ambassador and the Foreign Secretary some six weeks or so before the change of Government was made, and the Government of St. Petersburg had been unable to ratify the arrangement because the Government of St. Petersburg had discovered that it was necessary that it should retain a certain and very considerable portion of the pass of Zulficar, in order that they might

reserve, as they said, certain communications which are essential to the safety of their possessions in that part. It will be seen from the papers which will, I have no doubt, shortly be published, that when her Majesty's Government acceded to office the last despatch that passed between Lord Granville and the Russian Government was of a nature very stern and very uncompromising. As regards the Central Asian question—similar in many respects to the Egyptian question—the parties on either side had come to a deadlock. That was a very grave situation, for there were in that part of the world with which these negotiations were connected hostile armies in close proximity which might through some accident or other at any moment come into collision, with consequences which no diplomacy would have been able to avert or to remedy. When Her Majesty's present Government came into office they did so with the loyal and firm intention of recognizing accomplished facts, however much they might deplore them, with the intention of recognizing and making the best of them, and of endeavouring by all the means in their power to arrive, if humanly possible, at an amicable understanding with the great Empire of Russia with regard to those Central Asian questions, and to use every effort, if it were in the range of human effort, to avert the frightful and incalculable catastrophe of war between the two great Powers. Therefore, the negotiations which had come to a deadlock were recommenced, and they have been protracted—necessarily protracted; for reference had constantly to be made by either side to the officers who represented either Government in that distant part of the world. The negotiations have been from their nature protracted and difficult, but I deem myself fortunate in being able, with some amount of confidence, to announce to this most distinguished and representative company that the differences, such as they were, between the Government of Russia and the Government of the Queen with regard to the Pass of Zulficar have been composed. The Government of Russia having surveyed the ground which was in dispute more exactly, have found it within their power largely to modify the proposals with regard to the frontier line which they made to the late Government. Lord Dufferin, the distinguished Viceroy of India, and Sir Joseph Ridgeway, and the officers on the

spot, have been consulted, and they are of opinion, in common with the members of her Majesty's Government, that the new line proposed by the Government of the Czar preserves for his Highness the Ameer the command of the pass of Zulficar, and gives to his troops and subjects the free possession of that Pass, and moreover in every way satisfies our engagements towards the Ameer of Afghanistan. There is, therefore, every reason to hope that the delimitation of the frontier will, after the very long delay, at last go forward, and be pursued and completed without more delay. We may, I think, now that the great crisis has reached a satisfactory and amicable issue, also look forward, possibly not without confidence, to a new departure in Central Asian affairs, and we may express an earnest and not unfounded anticipation that some arrangement may by moderation, by labour, and by perseverance be concluded with the Government of Russia which shall give to the present state of affairs in Central Asia some degree of permanence and security. But I would not have you for a moment suppose that the lesson which recent events ought to have taught all parties in this country and in India has been in any way thrown away or not learnt by the Government of India or by Her Majesty's Government at home. Proceedings have been commenced, and which I do not think any party in this country will in future venture to stop, for the fortification of the Indian frontier, and for the increase to a certain extent and the reorganization of our military forces in that dependency. These provisions will be actively pursued. They are not provisions which can give any cause of offence, or which are in the least degree provocative towards any European Power. They are provisions which are fully within the reasonable rights of nations, and which it is the bounden duty of a prudent Government to adopt. I am convinced that if there is any man in the public service who is capable of realizing the great modifications of our position in India which recent Central Asian revolutions have brought about, the necessity of adapting our policy in India to these modifications, and the making of such provision for the future as may be necessary, prudently and cautiously, without noise, and at the same time effectively, that man is Lord Dufferin, the present Governor-General of India. There is one other word I would venture to say before I sit

down. I have noticed with much concern in certain journals and organs of opinion, of respectability, of influence, and of position, an opinion expressed with regard to our ally the Ameer of Afghanistan which throws doubts upon the loyalty and fidelity of that ally. I do not know, God only knows, what passes in the heart of man; but from all the information which has been supplied to me, and from a careful study of that information, I do believe that I should not be justified if I did not state, in the first public meeting in this country where I have the opportunity, that no ally has been more loyal to another ally in the whole history of Eastern alliances than has the Ameer of Afghanistan to the Government of England. Owing I think in a great measure to the singularly happy diplomacy of the Indian Viceroy, the Ameer of Afghanistan has been, I believe, convinced that we honestly desire nothing better than to remain at all times his friend and ally. In times most difficult, in some respects most dangerous, I see that the Ameer has thrown in his lot decidedly with us; and however solemn the engagements we entered into by the agreement of July, 1880, with the Ameer of Afghanistan, in my opinion he has shown by his recent conduct that those engagements have become doubly and trebly more solemn and more binding.

ALREADY IMPROVEMENT.

I should very ill repay your kind indulgence if I were to detain you any longer, but while thanking you again for the manner in which you have received this toast, and the patience with which you have allowed me to make these remarks, I will be bold enough to imagine that from what your indulgence has enabled me to say to-night it will be apparent to even the most biassed mind that, under circumstances very difficult and very trying, circumstances perhaps the most difficult and the most trying which ever confronted any British Administration, however powerful, Her Majesty's Government have pursued an intelligent and a straightforward policy in home and foreign affairs alike, shrinking from no legitimate responsibility. It will, I hope, moreover, be apparent that from more than one quarter hitherto very gloomy and very dark, gleams of light are breaking in upon us and are illuminating our future

course, and that we have endeavoured, not without some appreciable measure of success, faithfully to serve to the very utmost of our ability those common interests which are above all party—the interests of our country and of our Queen.

"COME OVER AND HELP US."

(AT SHEFFIELD, SEPTEMBER 4, 1885.)

A little less than a year and a half ago I came to Sheffield on a political errand, and that at that time our Radical friends imagined fondly that there was a great split in the Tory camp, and they built erroneous calculations upon the result of that split. Indeed, the Radical party at that time were quite inclined to be extremely friendly and polite to myself because they thought I was responsible for bringing about that split in the Tory camp. As you know, these anticipations of the Radicals were not realized. Whatever differences of opinion at that time prevailed in the Tory party were differences of detail, and not in any way of principle. The result of the Conference of the National Union at Sheffield was to unite the Tory party on a broader and more popular basis—and all the hopes of Tory disunion which the Radical party so fondly entertained were dashed to the ground. Another year has gone by, and the tables are turned. It is no longer the Conservative party which is threatened with a difference of opinion. That unfortunately is now the case with the great Liberal party. You see that Lord Hartington made a speech the other day at a place in Lancashire called Waterfoot, and immediately afterwards you see Mr. Chamberlain's organ—the *Birmingham Daily Post*—in a special article denouncing every word of Lord Hartington's speech and declaring that if he persists in the sentiments of that speech he will ruin and shatter the Liberal party. The great feature of the recess has been that speech of Lord Hartington. If you will give me your attention, and assist me by your silence, I would like to analyze with you the contents of that speech, and to point out to you the moral which its sentiments teach.

THE POLICY OF THE JUMPING CAT.

In reading over that speech the first opinion which came across me, the first question I asked myself, was, Why does Lord Hartington oppose Lord Salisbury's Government?—because there was not a word, not a line, not a sentence, not a single political opinion which betrayed the smallest or faintest shred of difference in political principle between Lord Hartington and those who are now responsible Ministers of the Crown. I will ask your attention while I make to you quotations from that speech. It has been described as the speech of a leader, and it has been described as a weighty speech. If it is the speech of a leader to say absolutely nothing which his followers can take for a lead, and if it is weighty to make a speech which should leave those who read it or hear it weighed down and oppressed by every doubt and deficiency, then undoubtedly it was a leader-like and weighty speech. Lord Hartington began that speech by saying that it was not his intention, and at least it would not be his endeavour, to make anything in the nature of an electioneering speech. He said, "There is still a considerable interval which must elapse before the dissolution of Parliament and the new election, and I should prefer, and I think you would prefer, that topics relating to the elections of a directly controversial character should, as far as possible, be postponed until that event occurs." Well, it is only about ten weeks before the general election will take place, and I think the postponement of great political topics, under these circumstances, is a most questionable proceeding. What I venture to ask you is this—for you may be able to assist me—I want to know what is the difference between an ordinary political speech and an electioneering speech. It is six of one and half-a-dozen of the other. When he says he is going to make a political speech and not an electioneering speech, it is perfectly evident he is reserving for the future a speech of a totally different tone and quality. Then he says he will reserve "controversial topics" until the general election takes place. What does that mean? That is called in vulgar language the policy of the jumping cat. Now observe how this is borne out by what Lord Hartington said. He says, "By the time at which the general election shall occur the issues which will be decided upon by the country

will probably be more clearly defined, and we shall all know more precisely what are the changes which we shall be called upon to make, and find out what are the positions we are called upon to defend or attack." I am told that that is the speech of a leader of a great party ; that he is to wait till the general election occurs before he knows what changes his party may think right to propose for the benefit of the country, and what positions, political or otherwise, his party will think proper to defend or to attack. Now I want to ask you, as a great body assembled here of intelligent Yorkshiremen, do you propose to put confidence, to place your political confidence for a period of five or six years, in a political leader and a political party who postpone all subjects of controversy, giving no opinion upon them until you shall have been deluded into giving your votes ?

DISUNION IN THE LIBERAL PARTY.

It is, as I said, a remarkable and glaring specimen of that debased kind of opportunism which is unfortunately the mark of the Liberal party of the present day. But there is a very good reason for it, and the reason is that there is not one single political subject which any member of this great meeting can imagine to himself on which the Liberal party has a united opinion. Take the question of the disestablishment of the Church of England—its disendowment ; or if you come to Scotland—the disestablishment of the Church of Scotland. Take the question of the abolition of the House of Lords. Why, you know it is only a year ago that Mr. John Morley and Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Jesse Collings were going about the country putting the question to meetings of enthusiastic Radicals that the House of Lords was to be mended or ended, and all the Radicals declared that it was to be ended. Well now, we know quite well that Lord Hartington would resolutely resist a policy of ending the House of Lords. Take the question of Ireland. Are the Liberal party united—is there any approach to, is there any hope of, unity in the Liberal ranks—on the question of the form and the extent of the local government which it is necessary to grant to that country ? Why, you know—to use the Latin quotation—*Quot homines tot sententiæ*. There is no approach to unity. But I recur for a moment to the question of the disestab-

lishment of the Church of England. It is rather an interesting question. Of course, we all know that one of the great features of the British Constitution, as great a feature indeed as the Monarchy itself, is the connection that at present exists between the Church and State, and we all know that there is not a single man in the whole of the country from end to end who professes Tory principles who is not prepared to give an honest vote and an honest opinion straight out without any concealment of any kind in favour of the maintenance of the Established Church. What is the position of Lord Hartington—this leader who makes this weighty speech. He opened a church the other day, or he laid the foundation-stone of a church the other day, and a gentlemen who was present of a curious and investigating turn of mind asked Lord Hartington what was his opinion about the disestablishment of the Church, and whether if the Church were disestablished that particular church would remain the property of those who built it. Well, it is very easy to give a simple answer to that question, but Lord Hartington, with all his great experience of public affairs, was perfectly unable to answer it. All he said was that the Church of England in old days had been rather a sluggish body and now the Church of England was a much more active body. However, we are all pretty certain of this, that Lord Hartington would not be a supporter of the disestablishment of the Church of England, and, therefore, we can excuse some amount of evasion in Lord Hartington, which we cannot excuse in others.

Now I direct your attention to another great leader of the Liberal party, Sir William Harcourt. You know that there are individuals in the country—and I am not prepared to recommend that their numbers should be extended—who are very fond of writing to public men and asking them questions on political subjects, in order to get their replies published in the newspapers; and no doubt a great extension of that practice would be attended with a good deal of inconvenience. Of course there is a limit to that. A gentleman wrote to Sir William Harcourt to ask whether the Church of England should remain in connection with the State—whether he was prepared to disestablish and disendow the Church of

England. I should have thought there was no difficulty in any politician who aspired to take a public place in this country answering a question like that; but what did he say? "I must make the reply I have always given to questions of this kind—namely, that I must decline to give specific pledges on public questions: to do so is in my opinion not advantageous to the freedom of action of members of Parliament." But what I want to ask you is this—do you think he has in penning that reply sufficiently considered the rights of the electors of England? The electors of England have a right to know from a man in his position whether in so great, important, and enormous a constitutional question as the disestablishment of the Church of England, Sir W. Harcourt is in favour of it, or whether he is opposed to it. The fact of the matter is that Sir William Harcourt dare not give an opinion upon it, because he knows the more active, energetic, and resolute section of the Liberal party are strongly in favour of disestablishment.

I have often noticed at Tory meetings a great deal of abuse and disfavour to the name of a distinguished man, Mr. Chamberlain. Well, gentlemen, you may disagree with Mr. Chamberlain's political opinions as much as you like, but this I will say for Mr. Chamberlain—no man disagreeing with him more than I do on every one of his political opinions—he is an honest and outspoken politician. A gentleman wrote to Mr. Chamberlain and asked him the same question, and he at once replied that he "rejoiced to think that the time was not far distant when the question of disestablishment of the Church of Scotland and England would occupy a foremost place in the political programme." I ask you this: Are you going to place your confidence in a set of gentlemen the greater portion of whom on great political questions conceal their opinions and refuse to avow their views in order that they may not so irritate, and so annoy, and so vex the more enterprising portion of their followers as to produce an amount of disturbance in the Liberal camp? Is that a policy, a domestic policy, which commends itself by its honesty to the men of Yorkshire?

I pass on to another point in Lord Hartington's speech. Lord Hartington went on to say, after alluding to the Reform Bill and the changes which the Reform Bill had made, that

there had been another change in the Government of the country, and then he said it was a very strange thing that the coming election should take place under Conservative auspices. Now that is just what the coming election will not. The Government of Mr. Gladstone, with a great amount of deliberation and design, threw up the places which they held under the Crown, and Lord Salisbury and his friends and party consented, for the purpose of carrying on the government of the country, to do their best under most difficult circumstances until the general election should take place. But I altogether protest against the supposition and the insinuation which Lord Hartington is endeavouring to put forward, that the electors at the coming election will be called upon to decide on the policy of the Conservative Government and not on the policy of the Liberal Government which had been in office for years before. Lord Hartington said the first question which the new constituencies will be asked to decide will be, not whether they retain confidence in a Liberal Government, but whether they retain confidence in the Conservative Administration. That is an utterly inaccurate, and a very improper, as well as inaccurate, account of the questions to be put before the electors of the country, for they will be called upon to decide whether, after all the events of the last five years, they will repose their confidence in the Liberal Government, or whether they will transfer their confidence to Lord Salisbury's Administration. Lord Hartington went on to say—because I am going through his speech, if I am not wearying you very much, as I should have tried to go through it if I had been in the House of Commons—he went on to say, that if on the morrow of the vote which drove the late Government from office a vote of confidence had been moved in the House of Commons there was no reason to doubt it would have been carried by a large majority. As a matter of fact, there was every reason to doubt it. My knowledge of the state of parties at that time in the House of Commons was almost equal to Lord Hartington's, and I am almost certain that if Mr. Gladstone's Government, after their defeat on the Budget, had endeavoured to obtain a vote of confidence, in the House of Commons, they would have failed to obtain it; and more than that, I believe that when Lord Salisbury took

office he practically commanded the confidence of a majority of the House of Commons.

CAUSES OF THE FALL OF THE GLADSTONE GOVERNMENT.

Lord Hartington goes on with a rare and refreshing candour to explain the causes of the downfall of Mr. Gladstone's Administration ; and what I wish to say here is this, that if I were myself to use Lord Hartington's words as my own account of the causes of the downfall of Mr. Gladstone's Administration, every Radical in the country would at once exclaim that it was absolutely false. But I am giving you in Lord Hartington's language reasons why the Government of Mr. Gladstone fell, and it is a reason coming from such a quarter to which you ought on the eve of such a solemn decision as the country is about to pronounce to pay the deepest and the most anxious attention. What does Lord Hartington say was the cause of the downfall of Mr. Gladstone's Government? He says, "I am free to confess that there were other reasons besides the rejection of our financial proposals which made the fall of the late Government more or less probable at the time that it took place, or within a short period of that time"—and then he goes on to say—and I entreat your earnest attention to these words—"The first duty of a Government is to secure the efficient administration of the affairs of the country, and this for some time past we have not been able to secure in so complete or satisfactory a manner as we could have desired." Well, now he admits that the great and powerful Government, supported by the best House of Commons, according to Mr. Bright, that ever was elected, had for some time past not been able to fulfil the first duty of a Government—viz., the efficient administration of the affairs of the country. May I ask you again whether you are prepared to replace in office at the next election a Government the principal man in which, or almost the principal man in which, confesses before all his countrymen that they had been unable to fulfil the first duty of a Government—viz., "The efficient administration of the affairs of the country?"

LIBERAL FOREIGN POLICY.

There are other passages in Lord Hartington's speech to which I should like to direct your attention, but I pass on

towards the end of that speech. I pass on to his statement about the foreign policy which was pursued by the late Government, and this is what Lord Hartington said. This was Lord Hartington's statement of the foreign policy of the Liberal Government:—"All we can say is that if we are replaced in power"—which I hope to God they won't be!—"if we are replaced in power, we shall endeavour to do in the future what we have endeavoured to do in the past—viz., while maintaining our own rights and interests to have a scrupulous and due regard to the rights of other nations; to admit that those rights deserve consideration as well as our own; and that when sometimes, as they necessarily will do, they come into conflict, to endeavour to maintain our own interests without infringing or trespassing on the rights of others." Well, that of course is rather a difficult task, to maintain your own rights in all cases without infringing on the rights of others. But as a general statement of foreign policy I endorse every word of it, and the only fault I have to find with Lord Hartington's view is that that was not the policy of the late Government. There was in it an essential defect: they did not maintain the rights of England. They were very scrupulous about the rights of others, particularly when the others happened to be for the moment a little more powerful than themselves; but they never missed an occasion of sacrificing the rights of England. Did they maintain the rights of England in South Africa at the time of the Transvaal war? Did they maintain the rights of England with regard to the negotiations concerning the future of Egypt? Did they maintain the rights of England and of her great dependencies with regard to affairs in Central Asia? And did they maintain the rights of England and of her colonies with regard to New Guinea? No, that was the fault and defect of the policy of the late Government that they always took less into consideration, and in practice neglected the rights of their own country, whose rights they were placed in office to guard and protect.

CONSERVATIVE POLICY.

Lord Hartington, after having stated the foreign policy of his Government, went on to make some sneers and some jeers against the policy of the Conservative Government which is now in office. Lord Hartington

said that it is rather difficult to make any comparison between the domestic policy of the late Government and that of the present one. I quite agree with him there, but I do not agree with his reason, because he says it is impossible to ascertain what the domestic policy of the present Government is. I ask you, gentlemen, is that a fair statement? Have not we given the country already, although in a minority in Parliament, some indication of what our domestic policy is? We ran a great deal of Parliamentary risk. We did not know what would be the temper of the majority. They had refused to give us any pledges. We ran a great deal of Parliamentary risk in endeavouring to get the House of Commons to settle down to legislation, but we were successful in our efforts, and several measures were added to the Statute Book which cannot fail to benefit the country. I am told that we cannot claim any credit for these measures, because they were not opposed; but all I say is this, that if the present Government had refused to take up these measures, if the present Government had not determined resolutely to pass these measures not one would have passed into law. I say we are entitled to take credit for them, for it was on our motion and initiative that these laws were passed for the benefit of the people of England. Lord Hartington alluded to the humble individual who is now endeavouring so imperfectly to address you, and he said it was true I had announced the other day that the Government were pursuing a great policy, but when he read my definition of a great policy he was unable to find in it anything but great professions and unfounded promises, unaccompanied by any enunciation of principle whatever. There Lord Harrington is absolutely inaccurate. I remember there was one declaration of principle which I made at that time, and it was received by the audience I was addressing with considerable favour. I said that if the country required that the principles of Mr. Chamberlain with regard to domestic policy should be carried out they must put Mr. Chamberlain in office, because the Tory party would not carry them out, and I think that is a pretty comprehensive and clear statement of political principle.

THE ROYAL COMMISSION ON TRADE.

Then Lord Hartington said he cannot discover the smallest

indication of the manner in which these professions and promises were to be carried out. I think it is not very difficult to discover the manner in which we intend to carry out our professions and promises. We have made in the first place no professions or promises in an absolutely precise form. We said if the country gave us the chance we would aim at certain things, but we have given an indication of one branch of our policy which is to revive trade, and we have issued a Royal Commission to inquire into the great and prolonged depression which has overtaken the trade of the country. The Liberal party, as you are aware, held aloof from that Commission ; indeed, it is the only domestic subject on which the Liberal party has been united—viz., that they will have nothing whatever to do with any inquiry, the result of which may possibly tend to improve and revive the trade of England. I heard last night a rebuke indirectly addressed to the Liberal party by a very great authority ; not, indeed, an English authority, but perhaps a greater authority than any English authority. I allude to the American Minister. His Excellency came down here last night to your Cutlers' feast, and made one of the most interesting speeches that I ever listened to, and the American Minister went out of his way and took occasion to say he was extremely glad that the present Government had appointed a Commission to inquire into the great depression of trade. I think that is a very good answer to those Liberals who, from party passion and party prejudice, refused to use their influence, and abilities, and knowledge, and experience to try at any rate to revive, or to see whether they by any possibility could revive, the trade of Britain, which affects so many thousands of their fellow-countrymen. If there was one refusal to join that Commission which gave me concern and pain it was the refusal of Mr. Broadhurst, who is one of the most intelligent and remarkable representatives of labour in Parliament. But I have always understood that the representatives of labour in Parliament put first and above party the interests of labour—and I think that when Mr. Broadhurst refused to join that Commission, and when he wrote those extremely spiteful letters to the amiable nobleman who presides over that Commission, I think Mr. Broadhurst to some extent forgot the first principle on which labour is professedly represented in Parliament.

A POLICY OF INQUIRY.

Lord Hartington went on to say, with a great deal of ridicule, that I had promised the country a reform of every department of the Administration. That is not true. In fact it would be quite an inaccurate expression to say that I promised the country, but I expressed the hope, which I have expressed for many years—and indeed whenever I have had an opportunity of addressing an English audience—that there might be an inquiry into the establishments which are maintained for the purpose of carrying on the government of the country, and an inquiry by Parliament. I believed, and believe still, from a close and attentive study of the course of Committee of Supply, that the establishments maintained at the present moment for carrying on the government of the country are on far too lavish a scale—that the country does not get work out of its establishments which a private employer would get; and secondly, because I have been most anxious as far as possible to re-establish and re-assert the control of Parliament over the national expenditure, which I regret to say, under Liberal Administrations, had almost entirely vanished. We have given some slight indication, I think, that probably that policy will be actively and honestly pursued. It is a fact which may have escaped your attention that in the composition of the present Government four Secretaries of State are in the House of Commons, and not only so, but the heads of the two spending departments, the War Office and Admiralty, are also in the House of Commons, thereby bringing them more directly under the control of Parliament by placing absolutely in the House of Commons the responsible heads of those departments. That is a matter not altogether unworthy of your attention. That was not an accident, but there is another matter which may indicate to you the policy a Conservative Government would be likely to pursue with regard to these establishments and their excessive expenditure. You are aware that when Lord Northbrook, the Whig chief of the Admiralty resigned his office, it was found that he had spent about one million more than he had any right to spend, and more than he had any idea he had spent. A million is a large sum of money, and it would have been very easy for the present Government, if they had followed the old laws,

to have appointed a departmental committee, who would merely have hushed the matter up—that is to say a committee of the officials of the department, who would have done all they could to save the backs of the other members and officials of the department, and generally to have swept it away out of public notice and attention. That would undoubtedly have been the Whig policy, but that was not the Tory policy. When we discovered this grave scandal in official management we placed it before the House of Commons, and induced the House of Commons to appoint a committee to inquire into how that money had been made away with, and we did not put upon that committee a single member of the Government. It was essentially an independent committee of the representatives of the English people, which inquired into a gross official scandal. I think that is an indication of the policy which the Tory party mean to pursue with regard to the expenditure of the country.

THE GENTLEMAN IN THE CORNER.

Lord Hartington went on to say that I had promised an increased and a more powerful navy, but at the same time I promised reduced burdens and a more economical expenditure, and then he stigmatized the promise as ridiculous. Well, again I say I made no such promise. On more than one occasion I have declined to make any political promises such as were the feature of the Mid-Lothian campaign. These are not the promises which the present Government will go in for, but this I am sure of, that whatever indication the present Government may give of the policy which they mean to pursue, whatever statements they make as to their hopes with regard to the future policy of the country, those indications they will endeavour to make good; those statements they will endeavour to carry out to the full. But I would point out that there is absolutely nothing extravagant, absolutely nothing impossible, in the combination of reduced burdens and economical expenditure, and at the same time a more powerful navy, because if you find that you are wasting money, as I think you will probably find, wasting large sums of money in your civil establishments, and very large economies might be made in the civil establishments of the country, surely if you are able to provide a more

thrifty scale of administration you will liberate a considerable sum of money which you spend on your navy and reduce the burdens upon the people. Tell me, do you consider it absolutely impossible so to revise or to rearrange or to redistribute the taxation of the country that the burden may fall more equally on all classes of the community. I think it is not. I believe that would be the policy of the present Government if the gentleman in the corner right up there under the ceiling will be kind enough to give us his vote and support. Lord Hartington said that in the programme of the present Government there was absolutely no legislation. That is a totally inaccurate statement, and one which Lord Hartington ought not to have permitted himself to make. The present Government is absolutely pledged, and deeply pledged, to deal on a very large and broad and permanent basis with the local Government of the three kingdoms, and that is a work which I think, as I have said already, would occupy the attention and almost monopolize the attention of an entire Parliament. It is about as large a piece of legislation as could well be proposed.

THE LAND QUESTION.

But Lord Hartington goes on to say that we are not prepared to deal with the question of tenure and ownership of land, and Lord Hartington draws a most gloomy picture of the state of the landed interest. He altogether omits to mention the great Act which was passed by Lord Cairns, which met with no support from the Liberal party, but which passed by its own intrinsic merits and excellence. If those interested in the land question will only be contented to wait a few years until agriculture shall be revived, and until trade is a little more brisk and prosperous, you may depend upon it the action of the Act in bringing into the market and breaking up large estates will be more effective than those who promoted it and those who have studied it conceived to be possible. And what is Lord Hartington's description of the state of the landed interest—and you who are occupied in town pursuits are deeply interested in the prosperity of the landed interest—for after all it is those who are bound up in the landed interest and those who depend upon the landed interest, who

are the principal purchasers of your chief productions? This is the description of the landed interest after five and a half years of Liberal Government, and after the promises of Mid-Lothian. He says, "Take the land question. Is there any class which is satisfied with the present position of the land question? Are the landlords satisfied? They have had to reduce their rents. In some instances they have been unable to let their land at any rent at all. They are unable, in many cases, if they wish to dispose of their estates, to find purchasers. Are the tenant farmers satisfied? They will tell you almost unanimously that they are losing money. Many of them have had to quit their holdings, and many others have had to take smaller ones. The landlords as a rule, have not capital to lay out in the improvement of their estates, and tenants have not capital with which to improve their holdings, and they are unable to obtain the capital. The employment of agricultural labourers is diminishing. Many of them are forced to leave the country and migrate into already overcrowded cities and towns." Well, he says, "Is this a state of things which is satisfactory either to the nation or to any of the classes which are more directly connected with the land?" I want to know what Lord Hartington or his colleagues have done to relieve this depression or to bring about a settlement of the question. They have been five years in office, and it is under them that this critical and anxious state of things has grown up. If I had made that statement about the landed interest and said that was the condition of the landed interest it would have been called an exaggerated and false statement, merely made for the purpose of stirring up political feeling against the Liberal Government; but this is Lord Hartington's statement, and therefore I put it before you with much confidence.

Well, now mark what Lord Hartington proposes to do for the landed interest, because this is still more interesting. Remember, this is the speech of a leader—a very weighty speech. Lord Hartington enumerates many reforms of the land laws which have been proposed. He says: "There are reformers now who are not satisfied with demanding the abolition of the law of primogeniture, but desire the adoption of the system which prevails in France of the compulsory division of estates amongst all the members of a family; there are proposals for an arbitrary limitation of the size of

estates, and for the compulsory purchase either by the State or by local authorities of estates for the purpose of subdivision amongst yeomen, tenant farmers, and agricultural labourers. Other proposals have been made for coming to the rescue of the tenant farmers by adopting fair rents and free sale for England and Scotland as well as for Ireland." Now, gentlemen, you are aware that all this summarizes Mr. Chamberlain's proposals for dealing with the land of England, and what Lord Hartington says about Mr. Chamberlain's proposals is this:—"I will frankly admit that I do not believe in the efficiency or advantage of any of these proposals for arbitrarily or forcibly redistributing the land of this country." Well now, gentlemen, are you going to replace in office, to deal with the land question, a man who dismisses as impracticable all the schemes for the reform of the land laws which his most influential colleague, Mr. Chamberlain, considers elementary and essential? Lord Hartington dismisses them all. He says that they are worthless, and, on the whole, I agree with Lord Hartington. But he goes on to say that before trying any of these experiments, which are not warranted by sound political doctrines—and I expect Mr. Chamberlain will have a good deal to say to this at Warrington—Lord Hartington says he desires "to see tried to the fullest extent the remedies long advocated by land reformers, which have been partially applied, but which as yet are still wanting in full and complete development." Have any of you any idea what these remedies are? I have not the smallest. I have studied all the proposals of Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Arthur Arnold, which I believe embody the proposal of reformers, with regard to the landed interests, but Lord Hartington dismisses them all as worthless, although he desires to see tried to their fullest extent other remedies which have been long advocated. He does not, however, do himself or his audience the justice to state what these remedies are, and yet I am told that that is the speech of a leader. Lord Hartington then goes on to denounce the measures which Her Majesty's present Government have taken with regard to the land of Ireland, and he uses very bad adjectives in connection with it. You will always observe that when the Radicals wish to abuse any institution or custom they call it feudal; but when a Whig wishes to denounce a proposal he dislikes he always calls it

Socialistic ; and so Lord Hartington, having denounced what he calls Free Trade as Socialistic, goes on to remark that the present Government have proposed and passed a measure by which they converted Irish tenant-farmers into landholders at the expense of the State, or by means of payment on the part of these new proprietors of instalments to the State which amount to considerably less than they are now paying. "That," he says, "is a proposal of a direct Socialistic tendency." Would you believe he could give expression to such an opinion when I tell you that the great Irish Land Act—of which the Liberal party is so proud—consisted of two parts : one part for free sale and fair rent ; the other part providing for this very measure which Lord Hartington denounces as Socialistic—viz., the acquiring by the tenant farmer of the freehold of his farm ? And more than that, Lord Hartington, in defining the Irish Land Act before a Lancashire audience, or, I think, in the House of Commons, I forget which, he expressly said, that the first part of the Land Act, with regard to fair rent and free sale, was only to be looked upon as a temporary measure, which would pass away. It was to be a *modus vivendi*. Now the present Government have done that Lord Hartington denounces the legislation as Socialistic.

A NEW POLICY IN IRELAND.

Lord Hartington then went on to deal with another subject, and a very grave subject, and I wish I had not taken up so much of your time on other matters in order that I might deal with this more fully. Lord Hartington went on to allude to Ireland, and he alluded to the speeches which Mr. Parnell has recently made in Dublin, and Lord Hartington said he was very "grateful to Mr. Parnell for the clear and explicit manner in which he has defined his position, and for the clearness in which he has defined the condition upon which his alliance is to be purchased." He went to say, "The present Government has spoken soft words to Mr. Parnell and his friends." As a matter of fact the present Government has done nothing of the kind. I quite admit that the present Government did not consider that it was essential to the proper performance of their Ministerial duties that they should call the Irish members "rebels," which Mr. Bright and Lord Hartington considered them-

selves at liberty to do. That we did not think was an appellation or a style of oratory which was at all conducive to the harmony of Parliament; but, although we have abstained from that, I utterly deny that in the sense of Lord Hartington's expression we have spoken any "soft words" to the Irish members. He says we have made some promises and we have given some hopes, "which, however indefinite, have undoubtedly given to Ireland an impression that the present Government intend to inaugurate some change of policy." Well, undoubtedly we do intend to "inaugurate a change of policy." On that point I have never had the slightest doubt in my own mind. It would be very difficult to pursue the policy of the late Government in Ireland. It was a policy so unfortunate that it produced a social revolution and very nearly produced a civil war. It was a policy which was well described as an alternate admixture of kicks and caresses. It was a policy which so exasperated Irishmen, which maddened and irritated that imaginative and warm-hearted race, that I firmly believe that no amount of legislative power, no amount of extra constitutional authority, and no amount of bayonets and military, would, if the late Government had remained very long in office, have prevented disturbances and outbreaks of a serious character in Ireland. That will not be the policy of the present Government in Ireland, and I quite admit that we are going to endeavour to inaugurate a new policy in Ireland.

THE LAPSE OF THE COERCION ACT.

But Lord Hartington says that the conduct of the Government in regard to Ireland has "dealt a blow both at political morality and at the cause of law and order in Ireland." Well, that raises a very serious question. There is nothing on which the policy of the present Government has been so sharply attacked as their treatment of Ireland, and the chief feature of the policy of the present Government has, undoubtedly, been their determination not to renew the Crimes Act. Well now, my lords and gentlemen, perhaps you will allow me, as I have never yet had an opportunity, and I do not know that any member of the Government has yet had an opportunity of going into these matters before a large public audience—

perhaps you will allow me to enter into that matter with some detail. Some weeks before the late Government fell it was obvious to any ordinarily clever political observer that the late Government were likely to fall, and the consequences of the fall of the late Government were a subject of most serious consideration to Lord Salisbury and his immediate political friends. Without doubt, the gravest consequences which would attend the fall of the late Government were considered by Lord Salisbury and his friends to have reference to the question of the government of Ireland, and whether Ireland could or could not be governed by the ordinary law. That subject was considered with immense deliberation. We had many facilities for gaining information. In the first place we numbered amongst our party perhaps the most experienced, most wise, and the most cautious of all modern Irishmen—I mean the Lord Chancellor of Ireland, whom you used to know so well as Mr. Gibson. We had also many other sources of accurate information, and weeks before the late Government fell, Lord Salisbury and his friends came to the conclusion that in the absence of official information—that was the important saving clause—in the absence of official information there was nothing, as far as we could see, which would warrant a Government in applying to Parliament for exceptional laws for the administration of Ireland. That was a decision taken long before the late Government came to grief, and when Mr. Gladstone's Government did fall, and Lord Salisbury succeeded Mr. Gladstone as Prime Minister, no official information came to light of such gravity as would have authorized Lord Salisbury and his friends in departing from the decision which some time before they had deliberately and carefully taken. Never was there a decision on any grave question of policy more deliberately and more anxiously considered, and, further, I believe this, that there never was one which was more guided by the light of constitutional practice and custom. Because we as Englishmen must remember this for the sake of our own liberties and for the sake of the liberties of our sons and those who come after us, that the Constitution of England absolutely prohibits the imposition of exceptional restraints on liberty except in times of great disorder and great social danger.

Never was there, moreover, a decision more unanimously accepted by the public. It is a most curious phenomenon that never was there a decision taken on a question of Irish policy which was more unanimously accepted by the whole of Ireland. That is a matter which has escaped, I think, the notice it deserves. In the House of Commons the representatives of Ulster, with a rare and exalted patriotism, and with a singular discrimination and knowledge of the actual state of their country, almost without exception, supported the policy of the Government. No one single expression of feeling from any public body in Ulster reached Her Majesty's Government disapproving of the course which Her Majesty's Government had thought fit to pursue. In the House of Lords, where the Irish peerage was very strongly represented, not a single word was uttered against the policy of the present Government. Yet it was this decision, so accepted by the English public and by the great Tory party and by the whole of Ireland, it was this decision which Mr. Gladstone's Government was absolutely unable to arrive at, and in endeavouring to arrive at which Mr. Gladstone's Government collapsed. Now this is still more remarkable, that Lord Spencer, who insisted on the renewal of the Crimes Act, who we know made a special point that he would be unable to govern Ireland without extraordinary powers, and who by that insistence of his shattered the unity of the Cabinet, and brought about the collapse of his colleagues—Lord Spencer, when Lord Carnarvon communicated in the House of Lords the policy of the present Government with regard to the non-renewal of the Crimes Act, did not offer a single word in opposition, nor explain a single one of the reasons which had induced him to insist on a contrary policy being pursued by the present Government. These are considerations which I think you ought to remember and to think over when you find Lord Hartington bringing these violent and random accusations against the present Ministry. I have never disguised from myself or from any one else that in that decision which the Government took they assumed a great responsibility ; but I claim that their action was acquiesced in by the public of the three kingdoms, and I think it is to their credit at any rate that for the first time for many years a great act of

policy towards Ireland has been adopted by the Government and by Parliament which has obtained practically popular unanimity.

1880 AND 1885.

The Radicals say, "Oh, yes; the policy you are pursuing is right enough, but you have no title to pursue such a policy because you denounced the late Government for not taking exceptional powers in 1880, and you hounded them on"—that is their elegant expression—"to coercion in 1881 and 1882." That is a perfectly untrue description of affairs, and I am rather glad to refresh your memories on this point, in case they should want refreshing. It is quite true that in 1880 we pointed out to Mr. Gladstone's Government the state of Ireland, where the prospect was alarming owing to the distress caused partly by great famine. They were running a most important risk in allowing certain mild exceptional laws, of great assistance to the Government, to expire. We warned the Government, but they laughed at and derided the warnings, and nobody laughed louder or derided more bitterly and contemptuously the warnings of the Opposition than Lord Spencer. But in 1881 and 1882 all our predictions were fulfilled. When the state of Ireland was troubled, when blood was being shed ruthlessly in one way or another in almost every quarter of the land, then we undoubtedly held the late Government responsible for that state of things, and we declared that the state of Ireland was so alarming and terrible that it demanded the most stringent and exceptional laws for the restoration and preservation of order, and again we were laughed at, again we were derided, although on that occasion men like Mr. Forster and Mr. Goschen, men of very great knowledge and impartiality, took the same view as we did. Well, Mr. Forster and his friend Lord Cowper, who was at that time Lord-Lieutenant, were overthrown by a disreputable Cabinet intrigue, which no doubt was principally the work of Mr. Chamberlain, but to which Lord Spencer was a party, and it was not until Lord Frederick Cavendish and Mr. Burke had been assassinated, it was not until those fatal catastrophes which so shocked the country from end to end, and which were generally known as the Phoenix Park murders—it was not

until then that Lord Spencer and his colleagues commenced to endeavour to restore order in Ireland, and endeavoured to maintain the law of the Queen. Well, my lords and gentlemen, order was restored, and the law has been maintained, but the proceedings have lasted three years, and undoubtedly have not left Ireland as it was before that great crisis. But if that result has been obtained, and if law and order have been restored in Ireland, I claim that it is due entirely to the action and the attitude of the Tory Opposition, and in no way can it be ascribed to the policy of the Liberal party. And are we, the Tory party, who really produced this result, are we to be precluded from recognizing the result of the policy which we enforced ; and are we to be precluded from acting on those results that are obvious and patent to all disinterested observers ? Are we to be told that because we said that in 1880 and 1881 Ireland required exceptional treatment, that Ireland required coercive laws, are we to be bound down to coercion for all time ? I say the assertion is ridiculous, and frivolous, and intolerant, and I utter the strongest protest against the constant accusation which I see made by apparently impartial and moderate-minded people, that, as a Government, we are pursuing towards Ireland a policy which we denounced in Opposition. I say we are doing nothing of the kind.

THE MAAMSTRASNA INQUIRY.

So much for the general policy of the Government towards Ireland. But I would like to deal with a question of detail which has also been most malignantly misrepresented. I allude to the case of the Maamstrasna murders. You know the present Government have been accused, and Lord Hartington, I am sorry to say, has joined in the accusation, of surrendering the Irish Executive to Mr. Parnell, of throwing over judges and juries, and of bringing the administration of law into utter discredit in Ireland. Well, the whole of these accusations are absolutely false. They do not rest upon a single fragment of truth. Mr. Parnell, in the House of Commons, demanded from the present Government that there should be a special independent inquiry into the circumstances of the Maamstrasna case, and the present

Government sternly and in the most uncompromising manner refused Mr. Parnell's demand, and the demand was negatived by the House of Commons; but the present Government undoubtedly said this, that if any convict in Ireland who might be undergoing any sentence were to memorialize the Lord-Lieutenant to the effect that his case ought to be reconsidered, that then it was the bounden and constitutional duty of the Lord-Lieutenant, impartially and without prejudice, and to the best of his ability, to examine into that case, and to examine it by the light of any new facts or evidence his friends might be able to adduce. Well, that was absolutely nothing more or less than a deliberate and calm enunciation of a sound and high constitutional principle. The Lord-Lieutenant is bound by the nature of his office to inquire into the memorials of convicts, and by merely making this announcement of constitutional practice, immemorial in the annals of the Viceroyalty in Ireland, Lord Hartington tells us that we have dealt a blow at political morality and against law and order in Ireland. I ask you is that a reasonable accusation, or one on which you will place any weight or to which you will attach any importance? I feel that I have detained you, gentlemen, at very great length, and I ought to bring my remarks to a close in spite of your indulgence.

NOT MUCH DIFFERENCE AFTER ALL.

Lord Hartington concludes that speech to which I have devoted so much attention with these words:—"I trust before very long to have the opportunity of explaining more fully my opinions on some of these questions to you." I hope most sincerely he will, because at the present moment he has explained nothing. He then says, "Although I have never professed to be, and do not profess to be, what is termed an advanced reformer, I am still true, as I believe I have hitherto been, to the doctrines and opinions of the Liberal party." Well, although, it has not been my intention it may possibly have occurred to you that I have spoken somewhat bitterly of Lord Hartington. If that is so I ask you to dismiss the thought from your minds. Lord Hartington is a politician for whom his opponents have the greatest possible respect, and for much of whose career his opponents may well

admit great admiration. I do believe that Lord Hartington has on all occasions worthily and honourably maintained the patriotic reputation which is the appanage of the historic family to which he belongs. But with all that feeling of respect for Lord Hartington, I say before you that in my opinion he has not been true to the doctrines and opinions of the Liberal party. I think he has abandoned these doctrines and these principles. He has been content to follow other guides who professed very different opinions and very different principles. It is quite clear that Lord Hartington, in his recent political course, has not secured the approval of a typical Liberal like Mr. Goschen, but if I wanted to put before you what were the real doctrines and the real principles of the Liberal party, which Lord Hartington has deserted, I could not do better than quote to you an extract from an address which Lord Palmerston issued to his constituents some twenty years ago. Lord Palmerston, in the year 1857, addressed the electors of Tiverton, and his words are well worthy of your attention. He asked a question which I think I may ask you, and which a good many people will ask from many platforms in this country. Will the British nation give their support to men who have themselves endeavoured to make the humiliation and degradation of their country a stepping-stone to power? That question would not come badly at the present moment. And then Lord Palmerston went on to state the policy of the Liberal party: "We offer to the country a Government founded on far different principles. It will be our earnest endeavour to procure peace, but peace with honour and with safety; peace with the maintenance of national rights, peace with the security of our countrymen in foreign lands. At home our guiding principle will be judicious and well-regulated economy, progressive improvements in all that concerns the welfare of the nation, continued devotion to education amongst the people, and such well-considered reforms as from time to time may be required by the change of Constitution or by the growth of intelligence." That was the policy of the Liberal party under Lord Palmerston, and that is now the policy of Lord Salisbury's Government. Does Lord Hartington mean to say that he will oppose that policy in which all his training was learned, simply because it is the policy of a Tory Government? Well, that is a very grave

question, because this is no longer a time when mere nominal distinctions, merely nominal differences, ought to separate politicians. It is a time when the responsibilities of your Empire have vastly increased. It is a time when the difficulties of government have proportionately grown greater. It is a time when the labours of Parliament have become well-nigh overwhelming. It is a time when we have made enormous changes in the Constitution and in the disposition of the electoral body. It is time when it is absolutely required that sound and healthy political doctrines should be placed before that electoral body, for them to accept it or to reject it as they will ; but I say it is also a time when men who command great public attention are going about the country with plan, with determination, with deliberation, attacking every institution with which Englishmen are familiar ; every law which protects individual liberty ; all rights of contract and of property ; all those rights with which British civilization by the wisdom of your ancestors in the course of centuries has surrounded and fortified British freedom. As one who has recently devoted much study to these subjects I cannot refrain from saying to Lord Hartington, after reading his speech, " If this is really all that you can bring yourself to utter on political questions, if you cannot indicate any difference in political principle between yourself, your friends and the Government which is now in power ; if, on the contrary, you are absolutely compelled by the honesty of your nature to indicate the strongest possible difference of political principle with a certain section of the Liberal party with whom for years you have uselessly and vainly tried to agree, then I say that you have no longer a right, as a patriot and as a citizen, to oppose a government and a party merely on the ground of certain old antiquated names which are merely the relics of effete controversies. You have no longer a right to act with the party of Mr. Chamberlain and his friends, who not only would destroy and shatter the Constitution of England, but would also shatter and destroy with it that great party of the revolution, Whigs, under whose care, guidance, and patriotism that noble Constitution was founded and framed." Lord Hartington, as time goes on, and as the general election approaches, finds himself still unable to escape from these vague generalities on political questions, still unable to

express anything but the strongest possible disagreement with Mr. Chamberlain and his following; then I say to him before all of you, not by any backstairs intrigue, and not by any secret negotiations, but in face of this great meeting held in this great town and before all England, I say to Lord Hartington and his friends and his following, words which were said to men, two thousand years ago nearly, who were destined to become great political guides, I say to Lord Hartington, and I say to his friends, "Come over and help us."

THE AGRICULTURAL VOTE.

(AT KING'S LYNN, OCTOBER 20, 1885.)

It is rather a common observation now-a-days that we are passing through exciting times, and I think that the fact of so large and so representative a gathering having come together to-night in this town of Lynn shows that there is an enormous public interest developed in the issues which have to be decided in the course of the next few weeks. Gentlemen, I said that I believed this great gathering was a representative gathering, and I imagine I am correct in assuming that there are here to-night not only those who have been for some time supporters of the Tory party, there are also, perhaps, here to-night many who have hitherto supported the Liberal party. Well, I rejoice if that is so, because I am certain that the issues of the time are so grave, the results which depend upon the national decision are so enormous, that even those who have supported the Liberal party will be impressed by the magnitude of the issues which they have to consider, and they will give—even to a stranger like myself—a quiet and an indulgent hearing, while I endeavour, to the best of my ability, to place before them my views as to the nature of the course which the British electorate ought to take. I said that these were exciting times, but I think you will agree with me that there are certain classes of the community at the present moment who are entitled to our commiseration and our pity. In the first place, there is the unfortunate minister who is nightly held

up by enthusiastic politicians as a monster of immorality. Well, he can defend himself, and a good many people say that they don't pity him, because he is paid for it. However, there is another class who are entitled to our pity—namely, the candidates who are so anxious to get into Parliament, because night after night they have to address large meetings at which they have to repeat the same old story and the same old arguments, and hence their presence at last must become wearisome and exhausting. And there is another class who are to be greatly pitied, and these are the voters who have to listen to any amount of conflicting opinions, any amount of the opposing statement of fact, and who, no doubt, to a great extent wander for a time irresolutely, not knowing what way they ought to turn. But there is a section of the electorate entitled to especial sympathy and special commiseration, and that is the agricultural labourers. I will tell you why the agricultural labourer is in some way entitled to your pity and commiseration. These voters are now the object of an excessive amount of attention. The most cordial and the most unusual civility is exhibited towards them from persons that up to this time had never seen the agricultural labourer before, and who are occupied with attempts to impress him with the fact that they had always been his friends, although he never set eyes on them in his life before, and the agricultural labourer at the same time has endeavoured to be persuaded by these total strangers that the persons among whom he has lived all his life, whom he has had an opportunity of observing closely, whose actions and whose motives for years past he has been able to scrutinize and judge—that those persons are his most bitter and deadly foes. I think that is a most difficult position for the agricultural labourers, and I will show you what I mean when I say there are a great quantity of total strangers to the rural districts who are endeavouring at the present moment to persuade the agricultural labourer that they are his older friends.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND MR. COLLINGS.

There is a public man whose name I daresay you have heard of before—Mr. Chamberlain—and he made a speech in Wiltshire the other day. Mr. Chamberlain was very angry in that speech, because he said Lord Salisbury

had called him a cockney, and that very much discomposed Mr. Chamberlain's usual equanimity, and made him make some very bitter remarks. But as a matter of fact, Mr. Chamberlain in the very first sentence of his speech justified Lord Salisbury's appellation—because in the very first sentence of his speech he said, "This is the first time I have ever had the pleasure of addressing a purely agricultural audience." Mr. Chamberlain has been a very long time in public life, and although he has only been for some eight or nine years in Parliament, he has been for many years connected with politics. Is it not, then, a curious thing that all these bubbling, and bursting, and burning emotions of Mr. Chamberlain on behalf of the agricultural labourer should, for a period of nearly twenty years, have been closely confined and restrained and kept under in his own breast? How is it that these tremendous sympathies for the agricultural population have never made their appearance before? It is a curious thing also that Mr. Jesse Collings, whose name is very familiar to you, has only within the last year or two—only, I think, within the last eighteen months—made that surprising discovery of that scheme of distribution of land which is to bring happiness to every agricultural labourer. Mr. Chamberlain and Mr. Collings have had, both of them, a long time in political life, and all I would ask you is this—Is it not a pity, is it not, gentlemen, to be deplored, that for twenty years or more these two great sympathizers with the agricultural population should have kept all these plans of theirs concealed, and should have wasted all this time?—whereas if they had only produced these plans before it is impossible to say what might have been the state of improvement to which the agricultural labourer might now have attained. Because, gentlemen, it would be very wrong and very improper to say that the sympathy of Mr. Jesse Collings and Mr. Chamberlain for the agricultural labourer is only developed because the agricultural labourer has a vote. That would be a very ill-natured and I dare say a very improper assertion, but still it is a very curious thing that this burning, bursting emotion which I have spoken about should only have exploded at the very moment when the agricultural labourer obtained a vote. I am almost as great a stranger to Norfolk as Mr. Jesse Collings or Mr. Chamberlain.

Although I am to a great extent a stranger to the county of Norfolk, I am no stranger whatever to rural audiences. I have attended a great many agricultural meetings in connection with agricultural shows, with farmers' meetings, and with the annual festivities of friendly societies, and these meetings which I have attended are among some of my most pleasant and most enduring reminiscences; and, gentlemen, my present Parliamentary constituents are all of them agriculturists. Really if it were not that through these various circumstances I have had some opportunities of studying agricultural questions, I should not venture, like Mr. Chamberlain does, to address a purely agricultural audience.

I cannot but feel very great interest in the contest which is now going on in this division of Norfolk, and in the circumstances of your candidature. I may say that you have been very fortunate in securing such a candidate as Lord Henry Bentinck. Lord Henry Bentinck bears an honoured name, a name that is very familiar to Norfolk electors, and he comes of a family which has for generations past given some of its members to the service of the State; and therefore I would venture respectfully to congratulate the Conservative party on having secured so gallant a candidate as Lord Henry Bentinck. But his candidature particularly attracts me, as also does that of another Conservative, Mr. Allwyn Fellowes, who is contesting an adjoining division. These candidates particularly attract me, because these gentlemen are going through on a larger scale what I did on a small scale in the way of an election experience. I know there are a great many Conservatives—no, I will not say a great many, but I will say there are some—who are gloomy and anxious and depressed. I did not say many; I said there are some—who are gloomy and anxious about the result of the Conservative cause in the counties, and they say that the agricultural labourer is perfectly certain to cast his vote against the Conservative party. I am glad to hear an indication of your disagreement with the statement, but it is an expression of opinion I have heard more than once; but for my own part, I don't believe there are any grounds for those apprehensions, and I have two reasons for that opinion which I will venture to give. The first of those reasons is found in my own experience with a purely agricultural constituency, in which the agricul-

tural labourer has had a vote since 1866—a constituency which is typical of English rural life, which is a scattered population resembling in its nature a little county—I mean, of course, my own constituency of Woodstock.

THE ELECTORAL HISTORY OF WOODSTOCK.

When I stood for Woodstock in 1874, I occupied very much the same position as Lord Henry Bentinck and Mr. Fellowes, except that they possess a very great advantage that I had not then. They are experienced speakers, and are competent to speak with ability, force, and intelligence the political views they have to express. Well, in 1874, when I stood for the agricultural borough of Woodstock, where the agricultural labourer had a vote, and where he was securely protected by the ballot, I had never addressed a political meeting in my life until I stood for that borough, and I was opposed by one of the ablest candidates whom the Radical party could possibly find, Mr. George Broderick, who is now Warden of Merton College, Oxford—a most able and intelligent man, and a man thoroughly accustomed to public speaking. Mr. George Broderick was also supported at that time by a swarm of professors from Oxford, all very learned men, and a swarm of emissaries from the Reform Club of London, and there was no promise at that time that Mr. Broderick and his supporters did not make to the agricultural labourers of Woodstock if they would give him their votes. The “three acres and a cow” had not been invented at that time. The promise to the agricultural labourers made by the Radicals was that every agricultural labourer, if they would only return a Radical for Woodstock, should almost immediately afterwards possess a beautiful newly-built cottage with a slate roof and a boarded floor; that this cottage should be surrounded by a fertile garden; that he should hold that garden rent free—that was the alluring promise made in 1874. At that time there had been an agricultural labourers’ strike. The Agricultural Labourers’ Union was in great strength at Woodstock, and the Radicals made perfectly certain that they had got the borough. They had not a doubt about it; what with their candidate, and their promises, and the circumstances of the times, they made sure that they had carried off the borough of Woodstock. But somehow or

other it did not go down. With all Mr. Broderick's eloquence and ability, he was quite unable to persuade the agricultural labourers in Oxfordshire that he was able to perform the promises he made, and the first result of the election was that Mr. Broderick and the Radical party were defeated by a very large majority.

A VOICE FROM THE CROWD.

Then there came the election of 1880. Again the Radical party made a tremendous effort to win the agricultural labourers in the county of Oxford. That time the circumstances were still more favourable. In that case the harvest had been bad, employment had been scarce, wages had fallen, and they had a candidate who, though he was not a clever and intellectual man like Mr. Brodrick, was a very sharp electioneerer. In fact, I think he knew almost as much about the underground working of elections as Mr. Schnadhorst—about as good a candidate as they could have found. They made perfectly certain that at that time the whole agricultural body would go with them, but again they were disappointed. Again the agricultural labourer distrusted them, although they sent their emissaries from the Reform Club and their professors from Oxford, and this time certain emissaries from Birmingham, people with black coats and tall hats and black bags, odd kind of creatures to see going about a rural district. They were full of promises ; there was nothing that they were not going to do, and that they were not able to do, for the agricultural labourer. The Radical party left no stone unturned ; they made perfectly certain they had won the borough of Woodstock, and again, as in 1874, they were defeated by a large majority. (A Voice : "Rotten borough.") That is just what it was not. I was perfectly certain that exclamation would come. I was waiting for it. I have always observed that the Radical party denounce as rotten and corrupt every single constituency in England that is not prepared to return Radical candidates. But why should the borough of Woodstock be more rotten or corrupt than this division of Norfolk ? It has exactly the same population. (A Voice : "Bribery.") Evidently the gentleman who interrupts me, in the crowd, has certain ideas as to how an election ought to be carried

on—his mind works in the direction of corruption. Again, I would point out to you that the Radical party at once asserts that if Tory principles by any possibility get the upper hand in the electorate, it can only be by the force of money. That is their idea, and you cannot put it out of their head, therefore there is no use arguing with them at all. All I can say is, the borough of Woodstock, to my mind, is a very fair type of English country districts. In that borough all the agricultural labourers were enfranchised, and in that borough all the agricultural labours were as much protected by the ballot, and as independent, as any electors in this division of Norfolk.

BLACK COATS AND TALL HATS.

I told you the result of the elections of 1874 and 1880. But we had another election there the other day, when I had the honour of taking office. At that time the Radical party thought they could win the borough of Woodstock, and pay off old scores against me. So they went in for a tremendous contest, and all the emissaries from London and from the Reform Club, the professors from Oxford and the emissaries from Birmingham, the black-coated and tall-hatted gentry, all appeared again in swarms like a swarm of crows. They settled down upon Woodstock, there were no promises they did not make, and they had a very good chance, for they were able to say to the people that I had done some very wicked things since 1880. I had opposed Mr. Gladstone, I had opposed the Reform Bill, and I had said that the agricultural labourer was not desirous of the franchise. All these accusations were brought up, and they made everything they could out of them. This time they thought they had it safe, because I was prevented from going down to conduct the contest personally. I was obliged to leave it to my friends, and again the Radical party made cocksure of the borough, and again, gentlemen, the Radical party were defeated by a crusher. Well that is my experience of a rural district in England. You may jeer at that district as being corrupt, you may call it rotten, you may call it a pocket borough, or what you like, but it is in my experience of that district that I found my belief that the agricultural vote will not go solid for the Radical party, and now I have no doubt that there are

agricultural boroughs in England the members for which could give you very much the same sort of story. There is the borough of Wilton, in Wiltshire, in the neighbourhood of which Mr. Chamberlain went the other day. No less a person than Mr. Joseph Arch contested the borough of Wilton, which is full of agricultural labourers, controlled by agricultural labourers, dominated by agricultural labourers, a scattered borough, a district of a county. And what was the result of the contest? Why Mr. Joseph Arch was rejected by the agricultural labourers, and defeated by an enormous majority, and I advise some of you here who think of carrying on arguments with the Radical party in this contest, I advise you to ask Mr. Joseph Arch how it was he was not supported by the agricultural labourers of Wilton. Get him to tell you the story of that election, and to explain how it was he did not at that time win the confidence of the agricultural labourers. I know he does not like to answer questions. I read his speeches. He makes very good speeches, but he never will answer a question.

CONFIDENCE IN MR. BRIGHT.

That, gentlemen, is one reason why I always argue against those Tories who take gloomy views of the prospects of our party in country districts. My experience is in a rural district myself, and curiously enough that reason is supplied to me by a very high authority, perhaps the highest authority I can mention to this meeting, by no less a person than Mr. Bright. I hope nobody will groan at the name of Mr. Bright. If the Radical party at the present day were only like Mr. Bright I should feel very little fear about the future of the country. Now Mr. Bright made a speech the other day in Somersetshire to an agricultural audience like the present, in a purely rural district and he made a very interesting speech. I am not one of those who are tired of reading Mr. Bright's reminiscences. His speeches always deal with the past, but at any rate they tell the story of the past in an interesting manner and in an instructive manner. Mr. Bright made a very eloquent and interesting speech, and almost the whole of that speech went to show that the condition of the agricultural labourer had enormously improved since the days when he first took up political life. He proved that the agricultural labourer was better housed,

better clothed, better fed, better employed, and that his children were better educated than they were a generation ago. That Mr. Bright proved by figures and by facts and by history, and having shown that by figures and by facts, Mr. Bright used these words, to which I would ask your attention. He said: "I think we have advanced so far in political reformation in the country that it is not a patriotic thing now to tell the working classes that they are an enslaved class, that there are laws which make them less than free men, and that there are countries in which they would be more free than here." These are Mr. Bright's opinions about the state of the agricultural population at the present moment. Well, now, that view contrasts with the opinion of Mr. Chamberlain, and that is one of the great difficulties the English people have to deal with, the sharp division in the ranks of the Liberal party. One section of the Liberal party say one thing and another section say another, and the confusion is worse confounded in the sharp divisions that we see among the Radicals themselves. Now I told you what Mr. Bright said as to the agricultural population while speaking in Somerset; and in Wiltshire, a county adjoining Somerset, Mr. Chamberlain said that it is still true of the agricultural labourer, as it was at the time of the Corn Laws, and quotes the words of the poet to describe the agricultural labourer as—

Landless, joyless, restless, hopeless,
Gasping still for bread and breath;
To their graves, by trouble hunted,
Albion's helots toil till death.

Well, I want to ask you if the agricultural labourer is now joyless and hopeless. Are they "gasping still for bread and breath?" And are they going to their graves trouble-hunted? And then the last line is applied by Mr. Chamberlain to agricultural labourers—Albion's helots! Helot is a Greek word, which described the most contemptible kind of slave among the ancient Greeks. Now that is the idea that he entertains of the agricultural population. But he is met by Mr. Bright, who describes such a statement of the position of the agricultural labourer as unpatriotic. But not only is it unpatriotic, but it is an utterly untrue statement. Mr. Bright's opinions are far more likely to be received with approval by English

audiences than those of Mr. Chamberlain, because Mr. Bright is more disinterested than Mr. Chamberlain. But we may assume that Mr. Bright's statement of the position of the agricultural labourer is the correct statement, and that the improvement he speaks of has taken place. What I want is to direct your attention to the effect of this statement of the improvement that has taken place. It shows that it could not have taken place if the squire, the farmer, and the parson were the wicked and immoral lot that Mr. Chamberlain desired to represent them. Now, Mr. Bright attributes all these improvements to the introduction of Free Trade and the abolition of the Corn Laws. Well, no doubt they may have had something to do with it, but it is impossible that all the cottages and all the schools that have been erected—that all the new farm buildings, all the money expended in the improvement of land, have not contributed largely, together with the introduction of Free Trade and the abolition of the Corn Laws. And don't you think that all those improvements to which I have referred have had their full effect in working the present improvement in the condition of the agricultural classes?

BENEFICENCE OF THE SQUIRES.

I was recently turning over a report of the present Land Commission—the body that used to act as the old Enclosure Commissioners. I find since 1847 that the squires—I call them by that title because it is a title familiar to you all—have expended in the erection of cottages, schools, farm buildings, and roads no less a sum than 15,000,000 of money, and that they are still going on, even in these bad times, borrowing at the rate of £400,000 a year, nearly half a million of money, for the purpose of rural improvements and development. There are two things to be remembered about that outlay. In the first place, that outlay, a very large sum of money, has been made by a comparatively small number of people, because without doubt the owners of land in England are small in number compared with the great bulk of the population, and moreover that outlay has been made at a very high rate of interest, at a rate of interest averaging, I should say, something like seven or eight per cent.; because whenever you borrow

from the Land Commissioners you not only pay interest of four per cent., but pay back year by year instalments of the capital that brings up the interest to seven or eight per cent., so that these wicked landlords and these wicked parsons and these wicked farmers have been going on year by year under all the disadvantages latterly of bad seasons, steadily spending money in the development of the resources of the country ; and by the development of the resources of the country, in improving the condition of the agricultural labourer. These things you require from time to time to be reminded of, because really from the language of the Radical party and from the language of the persons whom they employ at public meetings, you would imagine that the owners of land and the occupiers of the land and the parsons were a set of people utterly unworthy of the name of British citizens. It is necessary it should be pointed out what these people have done for the land, and Mr. Bright is altogether in error in attributing the greater part of the improvement in the condition of the rural population to the operation of Free Trade, or the abolition of the Corn Laws.

DEFECTS OF FREE TRADE.

You ought to remember this about Free Trade; that although Free Trade, as established by Sir Robert Peel, and the abolition of the Corn Laws, has made the necessities of life very cheap, and thereby conferred a great blessing on the people, still, at the same time, there is no rose, they say, without a thorn ; the disadvantage of Free Trade to the agricultural interest has been that it has diminished employment in agricultural districts. There is one thing which neither Mr. Jesse Collings nor Mr. Arch can possibly deny, and that is, that owing to the introduction of Free Trade, owing to the importation of foreign corn, arable cultivation in many parts of England has become almost impossible. Now every year you will find that the acreage of land under corn crops is showing a very large diminution. I think a diminution very nearly at the rate of a million acres a year—something very large—and you must remember that this diminution cannot possibly stop—under our present system cannot be arrested. It must go on, and that diminution of the area of land under corn crops means a continually

increasing diminution of agricultural employment, and it also means the emigration of the agricultural population either to our large towns or to our colonies or to America. That has been the result of the importation of foreign corn. It has undoubtedly given to our people the blessing of cheap bread, but at the same time it has largely diminished the resources of the farmers for the employment of labour on the land. Now, gentlemen, I don't want you to think that I am saying all this for the purpose of blaming the abolition of the Corn Laws, or in order to induce you, either directly or indirectly, to turn your minds in the direction of Protection. All I wish to prove is this—that the ameliorated condition of the agricultural classes cannot possibly be entirely attributed to the abolition of the Corn Laws—and that if the landlords and the tenants and the persons whom you, or whom the agricultural labourer, at any rate, is now told to look upon as his deadly foe, had not done their part, and stood nobly and generously, on the whole, by the people with whom they had to deal, Mr. Bright would not be able at the present moment to point so triumphantly as he does to this great amelioration of the condition of our rural population. I believe the majority of the rural voters know this quite well; those who don't know it only need to have it pointed out to them, and those who have forgotten it only need to be reminded of it. But having before me these two reasons—viz., my own experience of an agricultural population extending over twelve years, and this great and convincing testimony of Mr. Bright to the improvement of the condition of agricultural classes—I disbelieve altogether that the great majority of the agricultural labourers will go solid for the Radical party. These are my reasons for telling those connected with the conduct of elections on our side, and the candidates who are endeavouring to support the Tory cause, to cheer up and be certain that if they only work and put these things before the people, and take the trouble to explain them, and put the people on their guard against strangers who come amongst them with interested motives, they need not be in the least alarmed as to the way in which the common-sense of the agricultural districts will go.

LIBERAL PROMISES.

I must admit that those new friends to whom I have alluded earlier in my remarks, these gentlemen who come from the towns with their black coats, and their tall hats and black bags, are making wonderful promises to the agricultural labourer. They are at their old game. I have gone through it myself, and as far as the making of promises goes I quite admit before you that the Tory party cannot possibly compete with them. If human happiness could be secured by the making of promises, I myself would at once retire from the struggle. But, gentlemen, there is a great difference, as perhaps some of you know, between the making of a promise and the keeping of it—and the Liberals have shown themselves to you in two attitudes very strongly. They have shown themselves wonderfully clever, possessing an immense superiority over their opponents in the making of promises, and they have shown themselves equally clever, and possessing an equal superiority over their opponents, in the breaking of promises. Therefore I think it would be as well if those who have to give a vote at the election were to place a very considerable discount upon Liberal promises. But now, may I, with your permission, examine the two chief promises which they make to the agricultural population? The first thing they promise is free education. That is Mr. Chamberlain's great boon. He promises that if you place him in the possession of power in the House of Commons, if you give him a majority, from that moment not one single person o'er the length and breadth of England shall ever pay one single penny more for the education of any child. That is Mr. Chamberlain's promise. Well, gentlemen, I think there is a great deal to be said about the education question. Mr. Chamberlain proposes that the extra cost of his policy should be thrown upon the income-tax until that most happy and joyful and long-looked-for day when he shall be able to disestablish the Established Church and appropriate its endowments. But on the question of free education there is no need to use very hard language on either one side or the other. It is a difficult subject, and I will quite admit that my own frame of mind corresponds very nearly to Mr. Gladstone's

frame of mind upon the subject—as Mr. Gladstone so remarkably expressed it in that lucid address he put before the country. But I think myself that Mr. Chamberlain, for interested motives and for a purpose which he has pretty accurately calculated, exaggerates the hardships of school fees, the hardship which the payment of school fees entails upon the population, and I think he also exaggerates the benefit which would be derived from the abolition of these school fees. Gentlemen, I do not think it is the payment of school fees which tells so hardly upon the labouring class. I think it is the compulsory attendance of the children which is the hardship, and which deprives many a struggling cottage home of the earnings which might be afforded to it by the labour of a healthy boy or girl. And that I believe to be the hardship of our educational system, and not the payment of a penny or two pennies or three pennies in the week, and it is moreover possible that if you admit, as you will all admit, that the hardship of sending children to school is a hardship which ought to be borne by the majority of English parents—if you admit that, I think it is quite possible that the payment of a fee stimulates the anxiety of the parent to secure that the education provided by the State shall be of a good quality, and that the children shall attend regularly in order that the period of their school attendance may not be longer than is absolutely necessary, and that their labour may become more rapidly available for the support of the family and the home. On the other hand, I would have you remember that the Legislature has done much to mitigate the hardship of the payment of school-fees, because it has provided that in cases of poverty, exceptional or chronic poverty, these school-fees may be paid by the guardians, and that the payment of the school-fees in such cases should not in any way be considered a mark of pauperism, and should not carry with it the disabilities of pauperism.

BRIGHT *v.* CHAMBERLAIN.

Mr. Chamberlain says that all that is an insolent and unjust arrangement, and that it is an arrangement designed entirely in the interest of the wealthy classes, and he goes on to say that the payment of school fees is an odious impost, and of course these words are echoed by Mr. Arch and Mr. Jessie Collings. Now, if I were to argue against that

appellation of Mr. Chamberlain, many in this room might think my arguments were worth very little, and that I was a very bigoted person or something of that kind. I do not argue, but I simply take his opinion that the payment of school fees is an odious impost; and I go to another quarter for an opinion on that subject, and again I draw your attention to the words of Mr. Bright. They are extremely instructive and weighty words. Now Mr. Bright says in a speech made in Somersetshire the other day, "I will say without hesitation that I think as a burden upon parents the payment of one penny, or twopence or threepence, whatever it may be for a child for his week's education is not a burden from which any conscientious parent should shrink." Then Mr. Bright went on to say that there are very few labourers who pay more than the price of a quart of beer in the week in school fees. Well, that is Mr. Bright's opinion, and I have given you Mr. Chamberlain's, and as I have said before, Mr. Bright and Mr. Chamberlain, as on the question of position of the agricultural classes, on this question of free education are in the sharpest possible conflict. Mr. Chamberlain says that the elementary school fee is an odious impost, and Mr. Bright describes it as a burden which no conscientious parent ought to refuse to pay. I think the great majority of Englishmen will prefer to take the opinion of Mr. Bright, based on long experience, to that founded on the newfangled experience of Mr. Chamberlain. But I would venture to point out to this meeting what my own opinion is. I have no doubt there are cases where a good deal of hardship exists, and I think that on this vexed question of free education a middle course might be adopted. I would ask you whether it would not be a wise and a prudent thing to limit in every elementary school receiving State grants the school fee to a penny a week, and by means of a State grant make up for any deficiency that might arise? I cannot understand that a penny a week could constitute a hardship, and it appears to me to be a payment which every agricultural labourer ought fairly to be called upon to make.

LIBERAL FINANCE.

But, passing that over, I have given you my own opinion, and only for your consideration, because I find that men like Mr. Chamberlain, Mr. Arch, and Mr.

Jesse Collings are for removing the burdens on the rural population in one direction, while they would increase them in another. Now, I will ask, what was the nature of the Budget which Mr. Gladstone brought before the House of Commons on the 9th of June, and the rejection of which caused the fall of his Government? What was the nature of that Budget, and the policy of that Government? It was to increase largely the burdens on land, to place a heavy impost upon the growth of barley, and by indirectly decreasing the quality of the beer in use by the people, increasing the tax upon it. Well, then, what was the nature of the Tory opposition which was successful in upsetting the Budget? It was not a substantial or an unqualified opposition. On the contrary the position the Tory party took up was that they would not agree to any fresh burdens being placed on the land until, as they said, the late Government had made full inquiry into the incidence of taxation, both local and imperial, and until they had made an honest attempt to adjust the taxes on real and personal property. That was the position taken up by the Tory party, and that position was financially so sound, so unanswerable were the arguments by which it was supported, that the Tory party secured a majority in the House of Commons, and sixty members of the Liberal party absented themselves deliberately from the division in order that that division might be successful. Now, gentlemen, I would recommend to you, when the Radical party are so free with their promises among you as they are now and when they tell of the great benefits that they are going to confer upon the rural population with their free education and otherwise, let any of you ask them to explain to you their financial policy. Put it to Mr. Arch when he is talking of the labourers, put it to Mr. Jesse Collings or to Mr. Chamberlain when they come down to your agricultural meetings, and let them explain the nature of the Budget which they put before the country—a Budget which the House of Commons resolutely refused to adopt.

SMALL HOLDINGS.

I turn to the only other Radical promise which I will venture to examine this evening, and it is a promise which is best embraced in Mr. Chamberlain's own language. He

says if he is returned to power and allowed to have his way, supported by a majority of members in the House of Commons, he will confer upon local bodies compulsory powers for the purchase of land, which is to be let out in small holdings and allotments. Now, I want you always to observe that in any Radical proposals you will always find the word "compulsory." There was never a Radical proposal yet that did not either wish to compel people to do something or other, or leave something undone which they particularly wished to do. It is always compulsory legislation, and that is always against our ideas of individual freedom. Mr. Chamberlain wishes to give to local authorities compulsory powers for the purchase of land anywhere they like or where they think suitable. That is a large proposal. The language which defines it is very vague, and if it stood there we could afford to leave it; but Mr. Jesse Collings and Mr. Arch are more precise in their interpretation of this promise; and Mr. Jesse Collings and Mr. Arch interpret the promise to mean this: As you know very well all over the country districts of England, if you only place the Radical party in power every Radical labourer from that day forth will enjoy the free and uninterrupted possession of "three acres and a cow." Well, there is no doubt whatever an impression has been made upon the agricultural mind by that promise, and there are members of the agricultural community who imagine that that boon will be the immediate result of returning to office with a large majority, the Radical party. I am not prejudiced against any proposals for improving the condition of the people simply because they emanate from Mr. Chamberlain or because they may be supported by Mr. Jesse Collings or Mr. Arch. I have voted since I have been in Parliament on more than one occasion for projects emanating from the Radical party, and the improvement of the condition of the people, and indeed at times I have I think improved upon one or two of those projects, and what has been worse, by so doing I have incurred some blame and indignation from the members of the Tory party; and there have been times when the members of the Tory party have said that I was a Radical in disguise, and there have even been times when I have been called a Radical without any disguise. I only say this to show that in examining this project of Mr.

Chamberlain's we are really not affected by any prejudice or prepossession on account of its authorship. Take it on its merits—and I have examined this scheme for conferring compulsory powers upon local bodies for the purchase of land which is to be broken up into small allotments. The other day I worked it out as best I could, and I thought it might be interesting to-night if I applied that scheme to the great county of Norfolk. I will therefore ask your attention while I show you how it works out. I will make an enormous assumption; I will make a tremendous leap into the future, and I will assume that the local body has been elected and formed, that all its work has been allotted to it, that its financial resources have been assigned to it, and that all their duties have been taken over, and are being discharged. That is a tremendous bound into the future, but we will assume all that for the purposes of argument, and that the local body in such a position proceeds to purchase land according to Mr. Chamberlain's ideas. Well, of course the local body, representing the county, must treat all parts of the county alike; they cannot pick and choose, and say, "in such and such a village we will make small holdings, and in the other village we won't." They are dealing with the rates, and must treat all parts alike, as they cannot benefit the people of King's Lynn at the expense of, say, the people of Yarmouth. I find that by the census there are about 56,000 agricultural labourers in the county of Norfolk, and it will be a convenient average of holding if we take the three acres which has now become so common as being advocated by Mr. Jesse Collings, because that is now a popular expression. It is said that some of the holdings may be thirty acres and some smaller, but the average is to be about three acres. Therefore we will, for the purpose of argument, assume an average of three acres. The local body will therefore have to provide 56,000 labourers, scattered all over Norfolk, with three acres each, so that they will have to purchase 168,000 of land, which must of course be purchased in the vicinity of the different villages and towns, for it is no use giving them holdings a long way removed from their cottages. Mr. Chamberlain says he will give twenty-five years' purchase at £1 per acre. No doubt there is agricultural land for which that would be a very fair price to realize;

but, on the other hand, there is a great deal of land in the vicinity of towns and villages which, if you were to sell it compulsorily at twenty-five years' purchase at £1 per acre, would be sheer confiscation and robbery. However, let us take Mr. Chamberlain's figures, and drop any little details about confiscation and robbery. I find that in order to purchase 168,000 acres at twenty-five years' purchase at the value of £1 an acre the county of Norfolk would have to borrow the sum of £4,200,000. The local elected body will have to mortgage the rates of the county to that amount. Well, of course you must add to that original outlay something for fencing and for building some kind of little outhouses or sheds on each holding, and for making roads and pathways. It is of no use turning an agricultural labourer into three acres and expecting him to do all that. He has not the capital to do it. If you go as far as to purchase the land for him you must go a little further and place it in order for cultivation. So I allow for fencing, outhouses, pathways and roadways, and things of that kind, which must be made before the holding can be worked, £10 per holding, which I think a very small sum. That will add to the original purchase-money £560,000 or a little more than half a million additional. Then there will be the legal expenses of purchase, for of course the lawyers will have to investigate the titles and prepare deeds and documents of the kind, and I think it would not be at all unreasonable if you added to the purchase-money and legal expenses the land agency expenses; that, you will find, will come to £130,000 as the total sum. If you add these figures together the total sum for which the local body will have to pledge the rates of the county of Norfolk in order to provide every agricultural labourer with three acres of land will be about £4,700,000. That is very nearly five millions of money.

OBLIGED TO DROP THE COW.

Of course the local body will be liable for the interest of that sum. The ratepayers will have to pay the interest on the £4,700,000, and at the rate of four per cent. Because it will be perfectly impossible to borrow such a sum of money on less than four per cent. on such a security—that will be £190,000. (A Voice : "Where is the

cow?") I am not surprised at the question which the gentleman puts to me, but I found on working it out with the cow that the calculation became so complicated and so monstrous that I was obliged to drop the cow. However, I have got the land, and I have shown that to purchase land for each to the extent of three acres in the county of Norfolk would cost about £190,000 a year. And to that sum of course you must add the cost of certain repairs, the cost of collecting the rents, the cost of general supervision; and that, probably, you might reasonably put at about £50,000 a year, so that the total gross increase to the annual rates of the county of Norfolk would be about £230,000 a year, or nearly a quarter of a million. In all these calculations I am assuming that all the rents of these holdings are paid punctually, that everybody is fortunate and is industrious; and, therefore, from the quarter of a million I must, of course, deduct the rental of the holdings—that is to say, £168,000, which would leave a net liability upon the rates of a little more than £60,000, which will be an extra charge upon the ratepayers of the county of Norfolk, borne by all the ratepayers of all classes, and incurred for the benefit of a particular class. Now, the present total rates of the county of Norfolk, if you exclude poor rates, are about £150,000 a year, and, therefore, if you carry out this scheme of Mr. Chamberlain you will have to increase your Norfolk rates more than one-third. I have assumed good years, but it would not be unworthy of sensible people considering this project if they were to assume bad years. We do know that sometimes in England we get a succession of bad years. We know that there are sometimes such things as wet and cold summers. We know that there are such things as frosty springs. We know that there are such things as cattle disease, potato disease, and other agricultural misfortunes of that kind.

A TERRIBLE PICTURE.

Well, suppose you assume a series of three or four bad years such as we have had recently, and suppose you assume that some of the small holders are unable to pay the rent and the rates—for they would not only have to pay rent but the rates which their position as copyholders would render them liable to. Suppose one-

half of the small holders of Norfolk, owing to a bad season, or two or three bad seasons, were unable to pay their rents to the local body. You would have an enormous increase of the rates at once, for you would be liable for the interest of the money of nearly a quarter of a million ; and, mind you, small holders would no longer be able to do as the holders of allotments at present do—go to the squire, who is very much in the same boat as yourselves, and ask him to give you time. He has got to do with a local body, a corporation, which, as people say, has got neither a body to be kicked nor a soul to be damned, whose only business is to collect taxes, and which would sell him out ruthlessly on the day that he refused to pay his rent, and this process of selling out holders would go on especially in periods of bad years, when the holders would be unable to pay ; and not only those who failed to pay but those who had been able to pay would suffer. The more and the greater the number of the small proprietors not able to pay their rents, the greater would be the charge on the small holders who had endeavoured successfully to pay rents. The poor rates would be increased, everything would have to be taken from the rates, and the holders would be dismissed from their holdings, and here in Norfolk the cost of out-relief and maintenance in the workhouse would go up very largely, and that I imagine would be the result, the reasonable prospect which a sensible man would look forward to in calculating the risks and the dangers of Mr. Chamberlain's proposals. In a few bad seasons the burden of rates on the landowners, the farmers, the clergy, and charity trustees would be so great that they could not exist or maintain their position on the land. This is how the scheme works out as applied to the county of Norfolk. You would require to borrow five millions of money to buy the land required, and this would represent an annual charge of nearly a quarter of a million, and then there would be the management of 168,000 acres of land, and every person must acknowledge the great work and trouble this would involve, and every reasonable person must in my opinion see the utter folly and absurdity of the proposal. Where are you going to find your local body ? There are very few men who will be able to give up the time necessary to deal with large, difficult, and complicated affairs. If you take the men

who serve on local bodies, they are mostly either tradesmen and farmers, who have their own affairs to look after, and they could not give all the time that would be required to the county business. Then what would happen would be this. The local body would consist of a numerous army of surveyors, agents, and lawyers. They would be placed all over the country in expensive offices and buildings, and there would also be an immense army of clerks and assistants in the receipt of large salaries. This would lead to jobbery and corruption of the most unapproachable kind, because corruption always crept in where a large estate was managed even with honest attention and constant supervision.

INTENSE DISHONESTY AND FLAGRANT IMMORALITY.

I want to apply this view of the scheme not only to Norfolk and Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, but I will apply it to all counties in England. If the proposal were carried out it would require and involve a loan of fifty millions, and this would increase the county rate by two millions or more, and this would be the outcome of a scheme of land reform, which would be of the most expensive and corrupt kind. And this, gentlemen, is the landed scheme that Mr. Chamberlain is ambitious to set up, in order to set aside that system which our forefathers and ancestors in the course of time constructed. That is the landed system. Now, gentlemen, this is the point I wish to draw your attention to. Mr. Chamberlain is a very clever man—I do not know that there is anybody before the public at the present moment who has greater abilities for Parliamentary or public life than Mr. Chamberlain. He is an extremely clever man, and he knows as well as I do, and better than I do, the utter, the intense, the inconceivable folly and absurdity of the landed scheme which he is putting before the public; and he knows as well as I do, and better than I do, that no English Parliament would ever dream of allowing the county ratepayers to embark in such a project. I do not know whether Mr. Jesse Collings knows it—he is an enthusiast and a fanatic. And I do not know whether Mr. Arch knows it, because I have been reading some of his speeches lately, which some kind friend sent me up from the country, and the impres-

sion on my mind is that Mr. Arch has not made a very profound study of the subject with which he professes to deal. But Mr. Chamberlain knows it perfectly well, and this shows you the intense dishonesty and the flagrant immorality of the modern Radical party. Their leaders are allowing—not only allowing but encouraging, not only encouraging but absolutely paying—speakers to go about the country to persuade the agricultural labourer that the result of placing the Radical party in power will be to give him “three acres and a cow,” when they know perfectly well that such a project is utterly hopeless, utterly absurd, utterly ridiculous, and could not be undertaken with any more chances of success than a project for colonizing the moon. Now, not only are the leaders of the Radical party immoral, as I hold—politically immoral and dishonest—but they positively boast of their immorality, and in any Radical circle in London, or any large town, you will find the Radical party in a state of the greatest possible exultation, and it is everywhere repeated, “We shall smash the Tory party in the country, because Mr. Jesse Collings has carried the labourer with three acres and a cow.” That is Radical morality. For my own part, I have a much greater opinion of the intelligence of the agricultural labourer and of the rural population. I think it is a gross insult to the common sense of English voters to imagine that you can take them in for long by such a frivolous and utterly ridiculous scheme. These schemes only require to be explained, to be worked out by some of you gentlemen who make yourselves so active and energetic in election contests, before rural audiences, in order to be repudiated by the agricultural mind. I do not believe that the labourer will allow himself to be led into such a morass of political ruin by such political will-o'-the-wisps as Mr. Jesse Collings.

MY FRIEND MR. BRIGHT.

It may be said, “You find fault with Mr. Chamberlain’s plans, and perhaps you are right. But what are your plans? Do you propose to leave things exactly as they are?” Certainly not. We have our own plans, which we place before you. But, again, in order that the programme may come with greater weight to minds who do not look favourably upon the Tory party, I turn to my

friend Mr. Bright. I hope he will not consider that I have insulted him by calling him my friend, but really this evening he has been a friend, because whenever I want to demolish Mr. Chamberlain's policy I find an arsenal of weapons in the speech of Mr. Bright. In Somersetshire the other day Mr. Bright said, "What I want with regard to the land"—and remember, Mr. Bright has been speaking on the subject for more than half a century—"what I want," he says, "is not many or any new-fangled propositions." That is how he generally dismisses Mr. Chamberlain's "three acres and a cow." What Mr. Bright wants is "not many or any new-fangled propositions, but to remove obstructions in the way of the easy transfer and distribution of land." Well, but that is Lord Salisbury's programme. That is the Tory policy, and to those who express their distrust of the Tory party, to those who say that the Tory party is not equal to it, or are not sincere in their wish to remove obstructions from the way of the easy transfer and distribution of land, I point to the experience of the past, and I say, "Look at that great Act of Lord Cairns." It dealt with the whole system of land in England, and dealt with it in a manner which some people might almost call revolutionary. That Act was passed by the Tory party when they were in Opposition and in a weak minority. Surely if the Tory party had to work to deal with land, when in Opposition and when in a weak minority—to deal with it with such boldness and vigour as Lord Cairns showed in dealing with it, surely you may reasonably expect that in office, and supported by a majority in the House of Commons, they will be able to carry out boldly and honestly their land policy which they set before you—that simplification of titles and compulsory registration of all dealings in land that the Tory party is now pledged to effect if you choose to give them the power and the chance of doing so. If you place that on the top of the Government Act passed by Lord Cairns, it cannot be doubted that before a generation has passed almost every acre of land in England will have changed hands.

THE TORY PROGRAMME.

Well then, it may be said by some, "Is that all you are prepared to do in the way of land legislation? Will you

go any farther?" I think I should be prepared to go a little farther. I think that with great care, much precaution, and many restrictions it might be safe for the Legislature to allow local bodies, under certain well-defined circumstances, to purchase land for the creation of small holdings, but always in each case under the control of Parliament. That is your security. There is no such thing known to the law of England at the present moment as the right of compulsory purchase. Parliament, as representing the State, is absolute owner of every acre of land in England. Parliament may change the nature of any tenure or holding as it likes. But there is no such thing as compulsory purchase by any individual or body known by the law of England, except under the control or direction of Parliament. If you chose to limit compulsory purchase to acts done with the consent of Parliament and after examination by Parliament, then, I think you enormously diminish its danger. You cannot create small holders by the hundred or by the thousand in a year or two, as Mr. Collings would persuade you, but which, as Mr. Chamberlain knows perfectly well, cannot be done. If the tendency of the times, if the operations of trade, if the situation of the market is favourable to the creation of small holdings, then the State can assist and possibly accelerate the process. But if the tendency of the times is unfavourable, if the operations of trade or if the distance of the markets prohibit the movement, then the State is absolutely powerless, no matter what anybody may say, and any attempt on the part of the State to overcome the resistance of these great forces can only lead to utter loss and hopeless ruin. I quite admit—I admit most freely, I admit most frankly, most fully, most gladly, and most boldly—that the programme of the Tory party, the legislative programme, is a modest one, but I claim for that programme a merit which the programme of the other party does not possess. I claim for the programme of our party that it is an honest one. I have said over and over again—and others of greater authority than I have said too—that we will make to the country no great or grandiloquent promises, because what we desire above all things is this, that whatever we promise we may be able effectually to perform ;

and we well know that the people, if they put their trust in us and repose confidence in us, shall not be by our action or by our shortcomings disappointed or misled. No, gentlemen, if you want great promises, if nothing attracts you but gilded programmes, then I advise you to go to the Liberal party. But if, on the other hand, you desire from the Government patient administration, prudent progress, and united action, then I earnestly recommend the great landed interest of this great country to close up their ranks, to combine political action of all classes, and to do as they have done before—support the Tory party.

LIBERAL LEADERS AND THEIR POLICY.

(AT BIRMINGHAM, OCTOBER 23, 1885.)

Great changes have occurred since I was last in this Town Hall, some eighteen months ago. You have had enormous changes in the electoral body of the country. You have also had a change in the Government of the country. But, standing here as I do to-night, the change which most forcibly impresses me, and will, I think, most forcibly impress you in the aspect of things in this hall this evening, is the absence from my side of a well-known form and one which was well known to you, whom friends and foes liked and admired—I allude to the late Colonel Burnaby. Colonel Burnaby's death was a great loss to our country. It was a great loss to the Conservative party; it was a loss to our party in this town. But I do not know whether you can altogether appreciate the unutterably heavy blow which the news of Colonel Burnaby's death was to me. He was not only one of my closest and most intimate friends, but one upon whom upon every occasion I could confidently rely. I can assure you I had looked forward to taking part in this contest in Birmingham in conjunction with him, and I had looked forward and I had counted upon being supported by his indomitable courage, and his unfailing and cheery good-humour. I doubt whether there is any one in this hall to-night who would not sacrifice much to feel again the touch of the vanished hand and to

hear again the sound of the voice that is still. Do you remember when we were gathered together here in April, 1884, how on two consecutive evenings Colonel Burnaby narrated to you the story of the war in the Soudan? Do you remember how graphically he told you of the disastrous expedition of General Baker for the relief of the garrisons of Sinkat and Tokar, of the utter annihilation of that ill-omened expedition, and also how he went on to tell us, never making any mention of himself, always keeping his own great share in these military exploits carefully in the background—how he went on to tell us of the fruitless expense and the fruitless slaughter which followed the efforts of General Graham? I think that we do well to recall those matters now, not only for the sake of Colonel Burnaby, whose memory will always be fresh in our minds, but also for the sake of our country. It is well that we should be reminded now very forcibly and impressively by the absence from our meeting to-night of that well-known form—it is well that we should be reminded of that sad and terrible Soudan war, with all its many victims, gallant sons of England and gallant Arabs who inhabited the deserts of the Soudan.

MR. CHAMBERLAIN AND THE SOUDAN.

It is well, and I will tell you why I think it is well, we should think of these things to-night, because the authors, the responsible authors of that ghastly war seek a renewal of your confidence, and especially the chief, one of the chief authors—I will not say the chief, but one of the chief, one of the most responsible authors of the Soudan war seeks a renewal of the confidence of the Birmingham electors. Now, I will venture to ask you one favour, and one only, and that is that you will not think it necessary to utter or give vent to exclamations of displeasure or disapproval at the mention of any well-known name. I was going, after that little request, to remark that Mr. Chamberlain seeks a renewal of your confidence, and it appears to me that he thinks that England has forgotten all those episodes. In none of his speeches does he ever allude to them. I quite admit that Mr. Chamberlain's speeches are able and original and never dull. I admit all that. I concede to those supporters of Mr. Chamberlain

who are present to-night all that ; but what I say about those speeches of Mr. Chamberlain is that he deals entirely with the future. He tells you of all the wonderful things he will do for his country if only you give him a majority in the next House of Commons. Can he not, when he comes before a Birmingham audience, spare one single moment for some explanation of that past in which he has borne so prominent a share ? Is he too proud to defend or excuse those terrible episodes for which he was so largely responsible ? Is he so callous to all ordinary human emotion and to all common sympathies that his memory will not allow him even for a moment to dwell on the loss of his opponent in 1880, on the events which caused the loss of so many gallant English lives—events which made a great noise in the world at the time, and events which are still very recent—events by taking part in which my gallant colleague Fred Burnaby met his death ? The English people as a whole possess qualities which the Radical party do not always show very prominently. The English people as a whole are a very generous people. They are not prone to vindictiveness or to permanent anger, and I think it is quite possible that the English people might forget the past and might forgive its authors if they could be sure of two things—if they could be sure that the authors of that past fully realized the enormities of the blunders which they perpetrated, and if they could be sure also that those blunders would not recur. Now, what I would put before you this evening for your consideration—calm consideration, unemotional, without passion—is, can the English people have this assurance ? Does it not strike you that there is in this deliberate abstention on the part of Mr. Chamberlain from all allusion to that awful Soudan war—does it not strike you that there is as it were a kind of light-hearted and frivolous forgetfulness, or at any rate the assumption of it, which I think is displeasing and repugnant to the general English mind, and which moreover shows this, that the pouring out like water of British blood and British treasure is but of small importance to the Radical party of to-day ?

MR. GLADSTONE'S MANIFESTO.

Mr. Gladstone a short time ago issued an address to the electors of Midlothian. It was a very long address ; but I

do not complain of it on that account. But it was also an obscure address, and the consequence has been that it has had many commentators, and the commentators have added to its obscurity, and, like all commentators, they have quarrelled dreadfully among each other, and they have fought over this address like a pack of hungry wolves over a bone. You have now before you three versions of the address Mr. Gladstone has placed before the country. You have the authorized version, as it left the pen of Mr. Gladstone; then you have the revised version according to Mr. Goschen, and then you have the apocryphal or the uninspired version which is promulgated by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke. That is a very baffling and confusing state of things; but it is nothing to what is to come, because Mr. Gladstone by-and-by, and I am sure we are all of us very glad to hear from the mouth of Lord Richard Grosvenor that Mr. Gladstone is enjoying good health and strength—Mr. Gladstone by-and-by will proceed to Midlothian, and then he will explain the authorized version. But Mr. Gladstone's explanation of the authorized version will be immediately followed by Mr. Goschen's explanation of Mr. Gladstone's explanation of the revised version according to Mr. Goschen. And that will be again—and I ask you to follow me very closely here—that will be again immediately followed, or perhaps accompanied, by Mr. Chamberlain's explanation and Sir Charles Dilke's explanation of Mr. Goschen's explanation of Mr. Gladstone's explanation of the apocryphal or uninspired version promulgated by Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke. I think you will agree with me that that is a very puzzling and exasperating and maddening state of things, which, moreover, mind you, is so puzzling that I have had the greatest possible difficulty in getting it out, and I doubt very greatly whether the gentlemen of the Press, able and experienced as they are, have been able to correctly take it down; but that is the state of things that you will have at a very critical moment just before the polling day—at a moment when of all others the utmost light and leading as to the policy of the Liberal party will be most urgently required.

THE AUTHORIZED VERSION.

However, it is no use going to meet trouble half-way, and therefore, for this evening, I content myself with the authorized version, and it is quite true that in that authorized version of Mr. Gladstone's address Mr. Gladstone does at some length go into the past. He does attempt to defend the policy of his Government. He goes further; he makes very large admissions of blunders and errors on the part of his Government; but he insinuates in some parts and he directly asserts in others that all his blunders and all his mistakes and all his misfortunes were entirely the fault of the Tory party. I heard a gentleman in the crowd say, "Quite true," and I will, if the meeting will allow me, argue with him. I would put it to the gentleman in the crowd who said "Quite true," as I would put it to the meeting. Surely if you think of it, if you think of the state of parties in the last House of Commons, surely such an accusation as that is obviously and transparently untrue; and not only untrue, but it is unworthy of the dignity of a great Minister like Mr. Gladstone. Now, how can a party, such as the Tory party was in the last Parliament—a party in a weak minority—how can they decently be held responsible for the government of the country? They barely numbered one-third of the House of Commons; but Mr. Gladstone, with all his enormous majority and his great power, proposes to place upon their shoulders—upon the shoulders of that weak party—the responsibility for all the misfortunes and disasters which befell his Government. How could the Tories be responsible for the Joint Note of May, 1882, which produced the revolution of Arabi Pasha? How could the Tories be responsible for the bombardment of Alexandria? How could they possibly be responsible for the expedition of Hicks Pasha? How could they possibly be responsible for the evacuation of the Soudan? Had the Government of the day told us—the Tory party in the House of Commons—that they were going to do all these things, and we had assented to that policy, then undoubtedly the Tory party might be held responsible. But we never knew, we never had a shred of knowledge, of the methods by which these events were going to be brought about until they had taken place; and then, of

course, all that the Tory party could do was to pass to the best of their ability their judgment on them. There was one thing which I will admit that the Tory party may, in a sense, be held to be responsible for. They were, in a sense, responsible for the mission of General Gordon. I admit that; I quite admit it. The mission of General Gordon was announced to Parliament at the meeting of Parliament, and, although he had left the country, still, if the Tory party had disapproved of that mission, they might have censured it; and they did not censure it because they approved it. It was a desperate expedient applied to a desperate state of things; but though you may to some extent, perhaps, hold the Tory party responsible for the mission of General Gordon, I defy you to hold them responsible for the death of General Gordon, because of this there can be no doubt whatever—no one in this room will, I am sure, deny it—that if Mr. Gladstone's Government had acted on what was undoubtedly the clear sense of the House of Commons in the month of June, 1884, and sent an expedition then and there to the relief of General Gordon, as the Tory party pressed Mr. Gladstone's Government to do, and tried to censure Mr. Gladstone's Government for not doing—if that course had been adopted in the month of June, in all human probability that great hero would have been now alive serving his country and his Queen. It really does, therefore, appear to me that this accusation of Mr. Gladstone's, in which, of course, Lord Hartington most obediently joins, that the Tory party are responsible for the disasters of the Soudan, is utterly ludicrous and utterly frivolous; and I cannot at all understand how it can be put forward with any gravity by men of common sense. The person who makes it must either assume that the English people are the most unjust people, or that they are the most ignorant people on the face of the earth. Let me carry you back to 1880, and ask you to imagine for a moment how furious, how scorching would have been the indignation of Mr. Gladstone if Lord Beaconsfield had held him responsible for the Anglo-Turkish Convention, or for the Zulu war or the Afghan war. Those proceedings may have been right or they may have been wrong. The English people, no doubt, must be assumed in 1880 to have condemned these proceedings; but, at any rate, Lord

Beaconsfield and the Tory Government never sought to get out of their responsibility for those proceedings. They never sought to evade their just responsibility by taking refuge in silence, as the Radicals do, or by throwing the responsibility on their opponents, as the Whigs do. I think from all this it is perfectly clear that the Radical party do not at all realize how profound an impression all those events produced upon the mind of England, or what an intense irritation among the public that sequence of the Egyptian plagues caused. The want of appreciation of those results displayed by the Radical party is, I think, some argument, and to some extent a strong and powerful argument, against their being entrusted again with the government of the country.

LORD HARTINGTON AND MR. CHAMBERLAIN.

But I said that the English people, being a generous people, might forget the past and forgive its authors if they were assured that the authors realized the magnitude of the blunders which they perpetrated, and also if the English people could be at all assured that those blunders would not recur. Well, can you be assured? The struggle—that curious, but at the same time very bitter, struggle—between Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain is now going on. It was that struggle which went on all through the days of the late Government, and which produced that variegated vacillation which they dignified with the name of a policy. That struggle has not ceased; the conflict is now sharp and marked; and, moreover, it is exhibited without any restraint whatever to the British public. No doubt, as far as Lord Hartington and his friends are concerned, that struggle is conducted with the decency of decorum. Mr. Chamberlain is beginning to get a little bitter, and is beginning to call his opponents hard names. I think when you take to calling your opponent a skeleton it is not very complimentary. However, that struggle is a matter on which you ought to fix your attention betimes. It is coming on now, as I said, before the public, and, that being so, you can imagine what sort of conflicts used to proceed in the privacy of the Cabinet Councils under Mr. Gladstone. You can also imagine, or you ought to be able to imagine, how that struggle will

proceed in the future in the privacy of Cabinet Councils if you again pass a vote of confidence in Mr. Gladstone. But this is not a mere matter of party polemics. It resolves itself into a question of administration ; and the question of administration is the one thing Mr. Chamberlain never alludes to in his speeches. All his speeches deal with legislation or with legislative projects, but he never apparently gives a thought to the best methods of securing sound, prudent, and economical Administrations. A great nation cannot live by legislation alone. All your foreign relations or financial conditions require a most intense and a most undivided attention, and they require, moreover, that the persons who have to manage should, at any rate, agree and be united on the main principles of policy and in the nature of the objects which are to be attained. Now, would you tolerate—I put it to you as men of business—would you tolerate such a struggle, such sharp divisions in the management of the ordinary affairs of life. Would you tolerate it in the management of any public or private enterprise? Suppose the directors of a railway or a bank, or of any large manufacturing concern, were to be occupied day after day in an unceasing conflict with each other as to which should get the mastery, do you not think that would be shown very soon to the public by dividends which would grow small by degrees and beautifully less, with the ultimate result of insolvency and liquidation? Why would you tolerate in the Government of your country a state of things which you would not tolerate in the management of a commercial concern?

DISMEMBERMENT OF THE EMPIRE.

Mr. Chamberlain the other night in this Town Hall, at a meeting of the Liberal Two Thousand, amused himself by being very satirical over the address which I have issued to the electors of the Central Division of Birmingham. He said it was a rigmarole. Well, of course, anything may be a rigmarole. I might call his allotment scheme a rigmarole. Then Mr. Chamberlain said that my address was a scurrilous document. Now, I appeal to any single man in this hall who possesses the faintest approach to an impartial mind whether the epithet scurrilous can with justice be applied to that address. Then he said

that my address might be written by a penny novelist. All I can say on that point is that penny novelists sometimes write extremely well. But the portion of my address on which Mr. Chamberlain concentrated his most bitter sarcasm was that passage where I ventured to express the opinion that not even the strength of the British Empire could endure a repetition of the policy of the last five years. Let me try and argue that out, because, of course, in an address I could not go into detail. I do not think, and I do not think that anybody in this hall would be of opinion that the Australian colonies would endure a repetition of the policy which cost them the greater part of the immensely valuable possessions of New Guinea. I think that a repetition of that policy would cause the Australian colony to cut the connection with you, and to prefer to manage their foreign policy on their own account. Well, even Mr. Chamberlain would admit that the loss of the Australian colonies would be a very severe and irreparable blow to the British Empire. Yet, mind you, it was much the same kind of selfish insular neglect, much the same kind of contempt for colonial opinion and colonial aspiration, which more than a hundred years ago cost us the loss of our American colony. I do not think that a repetition of the policy of Lord Ripon's Government would be consistent with the safety of India—a repetition of that mixture, that extraordinary mixture, of foolish over-confidence and ostrich-like stupidity which showed itself in the efforts of the Government of Lord Ripon to lose no opportunity of exciting hatred between the Europeans and the natives in India, and which at the same time brought the Russian armies almost to the boundaries of the Indian Empire, there to find your army reduced several thousand men below its proper strength and your frontier perfectly unprotected and defenceless. Now I am perfectly certain that the European Powers would not tolerate a repetition of their Egyptian policy. Mr. Chamberlain knows as well as I do, and better, that when he went out of office his Government by their Egyptian policy had brought this country within measurable distance of a coalition against her of all the European Powers which would have shown itself before very long in a practical manner. If Mr. Gladstone's Government had remained in office, in a very few months, or perhaps I

may almost say in a very few weeks, in all probability they would have received from a coalition of the European Powers an ultimatum telling them to clear out of Egypt and to let others do the work which they could not do. I think you will agree that the loss of the Australian colonies and the loss of India, combined with a coalition of the European Powers to thwart your policy and to plunder your possessions wherever they could, would not leave very much of the British Empire. These are no exaggerations. These catastrophes were brought very near to you indeed, and the cause of these catastrophes was no other than that unceasing and desperate struggle which was carried on day by day in the Cabinet, and to some extent in the House of Commons, between the Whig party and the Radical party.

GIDDY GAITY.

That unceasing and desperate struggle between those two factions was the result of Mr. Gladstone's Ministerial combinations. I do not think that if these things were so—and there is very little doubt that they were so, and I do not think Mr. Chamberlain could effectually disprove the statement—if these things were so, I do not think that my prediction that the strength of the British Empire even would not endure a repetition of these things was in any way an extraordinary or a ridiculous prediction. But it is this disastrous combination which Mr. Chamberlain asks you to restore. Mr. Chamberlain, with boisterous jeers and with exuberant ridicule, consigns to utter obscurity all those who think it their duty to recall the past year to mind in order that from the past you may draw some guidance for the future. Well, I own myself I am quite unable to join in the giddy gaiety of Mr. Chamberlain and his friends. Mr. Chamberlain, in the headlong war which he is carrying on against the Whigs on the one hand and the Tories on the other, appears to me to stake with equal unconcern the framework of society or the edifice of empire, and all those who venture to differ from him, all those who cannot see eye to eye with him, all those who would place some restraint upon him or who would directly oppose him—all those who do not agree with him he styles with more or less opprobrious names. He calls them Rip Van Winkles or “Egyptian skeletons,” or when it comes to

dealing with me he calls me an ignorant schoolboy. Well, this is a truth I would try to impress upon you this evening. You may pass what laws you like for dealing with the condition of our people, you may endeavour by your laws to promote what is called social reform, you may endeavour by your laws to mitigate or even to abolish all poverty and distress ; some of your laws may be good, some of them may be bad ; some of them may disappoint you, some of them may succeed ; but if you neglect your relations with foreign Powers, if you think that a succession of blunders followed by a succession of disasters in the conduct of relations with foreign Powers is no concern of yours, then I am quite certain that you will find out before long only too bitterly that all your legislative efforts have been utterly vain and fruitless. I know there is an opinion, perhaps rather widely held, and an opinion which is sedulously propagated by some members of the Radical party, that what are called foreign politics are merely, as it were, a science, or even a jugglery, or, as it were, a fetish kept up by the wealthy and the aristocratic classes for their own amusement, and that the great mass of the people have no concern in them. A more desperately fatal delusion could not possibly be put about. This question of a sound, consistent, and courageous foreign policy is a matter of life and death to you. Why the very food—this cheap food which the Liberal party are so proud of—the very food and the wages of the millions of the working class of this country absolutely depend upon the effective maintenance of your empire, and a foreign or a colonial policy which threatens you with a loss of your Australian colonies, which threatens you with the loss of India, and which from its vacillation or its cowardice pulls away from you the hearts of the European Powers and creates against you a European coalition, means nothing more or less than this, that the millions of our working classes are brought very near indeed to absolute starvation.

I have read lately in the papers, and read with great regret, but without surprise, that there are some hundreds of unemployed in Birmingham, or even thousands, and I noticed the other day that some hundreds of these unemployed came together for the purpose of demonstrating to the public that they were out of employment. I also observed that they were informed by a very distinguished man that they had done very

wrong. They were severely rebuked, and they were told that the course which they had adopted would alienate from them the public sympathy. Now I do not know the merits, the actual merits, of the case which was presented to the distinguished man to whom I am alluding, but this is a curious thing. The people of Birmingham apparently may, without any remonstrance, demonstrate against the House of Lords, they may demonstrate against the Established Church, they may demonstrate against the present Government, they may demonstrate against the Aston meeting of the Conservative party, they may smash it up, they may break people's heads, they may pursue any course they like with regard to a meeting of that kind. All these demonstrations are apparently in the minds of great authorities in this town legal and advisable, but there is one demonstration which they must not make—they must not demonstrate against a want of employment. All I can say is that it strikes me as the most curious exception. I think that it will tax all Mr. Chamberlain's ingenuity to reconcile that exception with the doctrines which he has been preaching elsewhere, doctrines which you will remember go to prove the ransom which property must pay for its safety, and doctrines which go to assert the natural right of every man to live and be happy. However, I pass from that little Birmingham episode to the proposition which I want to put before you, to the proposition which I want you seriously to consider. It is this—that those unemployed whom you have in Birmingham at the present moment would be increased by thousands, by tens of thousands, and by hundreds of thousands, if a policy, a disastrous foreign policy, brought loss to your empire or danger to your arms.

MR. GLADSTONE'S FOREIGN POLICY.

This demonstration of the unemployed is no doubt to a certain extent produced by the intense and long-continued depression of British trade. Well, the Government appointed a Commission to investigate the nature and the causes and the extent of that depression and that policy was received with a shout of ridicule by the Liberal party, and the Liberal party boycotted the Commission. Indeed, I was told that there was an anecdote current in the House of Commons that a very great man

in the Liberal party, on being asked by some Liberals whether they ought to join the Commission or not, replied, "Touch not, taste not, handle not the unclean thing." I want to know why should a Commission honestly appointed to inquire into the nature and the extent of the depression of trade, a depression of trade affecting nearly every English home, however humble, be denominated an unclean thing? Well, this much, however, is certain—that you cannot revive trade by legislation, nor can you revive trade by Royal Commission, though both do good. There are two things, gentlemen, which may contribute effectively to a revival of British trade. One is a sound foreign policy and the other is economical finance. But, gentlemen, if you deliberately place in power a Government who have within the last five years wasted millions and millions of British money on fruitless wars, and who, by their policy, have turned all European nations against you, then trade cannot revive. It must continue to languish and decay. In support of that proposition, I would ask your attention for a moment to what is going on in the East of Europe in the Balkan Peninsula. Mr. Gladstone, in the address to which I have drawn your attention, alludes to the future foreign policy of the country, and he limits it to what he calls fostering the infant liberties in the East of Europe. But I think that is far too narrow a foreign policy, not only as regards Europe, but as regards the infant liberties. I think that the infant liberties, like other infants, require control and education as well as nourishment, and it is necessary that a prudent policy should be adopted by the Powers in order to keep the infants in order. I think it will be admitted that these infant liberties are an extremely troublesome and quarrelsome set of infants, because if one infant liberty obtains an advantage over the others, the other infant liberties are immediately ready to turn upon the fortunate one and, if possible, to tear it to pieces. I think also it will be further admitted it is rather a strong measure for an infant liberty on its own account to go and tear up a great European treaty. Now, Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke are filled with an inextinguishable joy because the Treaty of Berlin is, as they say, torn up and demolished. They look upon the Treaty of Berlin as entirely the work of Lord Beaconsfield, and from

that point of view they think the sooner it is destroyed the better. They look upon it as an altogether iniquitous arrangement. All I would point out about that is, that it is totally inconsistent with Mr. Gladstone's address, because Mr. Gladstone, not only in his address, but in many speeches which he has made, takes enormous credit to himself for having carried out the provisions of the Treaty of Berlin far more effectually and far more honestly than Lord Beaconsfield did. All I want to know is this, if Mr. Chamberlain and Sir Charles Dilke are right in their denunciations of the Berlin Treaty and in their great joy over its supposed demolition, how was it right for Mr. Gladstone to exhaust the energies of his Government in carrying out the provisions of that treaty? Great confusion and some danger of war undoubtedly at the present moment exist in the east of Europe, and what is wanted for this country is a consistent and intelligible foreign policy, which takes its stand upon the sanctity of European treaties and upon the inviolability of international law, and which is ready, when once that sanctity and inviolability have been practically recognized, to modify European arrangements in accordance with the development of freedom and with the reasonable progress of nationalities. Now, suppose you were to apply to this extremely confused and dangerous state of things in the east of Europe the policy which Mr. Gladstone's Government applied to Egypt. Suppose you were to apply the policy which Mr. Gladstone's Government applied to South Africa, or the policy which they have applied to Ireland—that policy which was never the same from day to day—why one of two things would happen. Either by your vacillation or your refusal to recognize responsibilities you would throw the European Powers into such confusion and disarray that the danger of war would become most imminent, or, what is more likely, the European Powers would take this difficulty in their own hands, and would settle it themselves, leaving you out of account, and without consulting British interests. Do you think that a war in the East between the Great Powers, a war in the east of Europe, or the other method of a settlement of the difficulties in the east of Europe, made at the expense of British interests—do you think that would revive trade or give employment to the unemployed? Your trade

with the Black Sea, with the Danube, with the ports of European Turkey amounts now to about sixteen millions a year. Would it revive British trade, would it give employment to the unemployed if the trade was to fall into other hands? Well, now, I am only anxious to show you this—the extraordinarily close connection which exists between an active trade and a sound foreign policy; and I wish to show you how much more trade, commercial and industrial activity, brisk employment, and good wages depend upon a sound and consistent foreign policy than they do upon any legislation which anybody you may imagine can propose. Legislation is a good thing in its way and must not, on any account be neglected, but a wise and watchful foreign policy is absolutely essential, not only to your welfare, but to your very life.

BURMAH.

Just look again a little further East—if I am not taking up too much of your time. Look again a little further East. We are threatened a little further East with another of those little wars which appear to be a peculiarity of the British Empire. We are threatened with a war with the King of Burmah. The result of that war, unless the King of Burmah yields in time, will probably be the annexation of Burmah, or at any rate some arrangement very much in the nature of annexation. What is the state of things? You have a great industry carried on in Upper Burmah, a great industry supported by British capital and employing numbers of British subjects, and that industry is carried on under treaty with the King of Burmah. The treaty has been violated, the company has been plundered and persecuted, and its employés are possibly threatened even with danger to their lives, and, moreover, the disorder and anarchy which have for many years past existed in Upper Burmah have altogether arrested the development of your own territory bordering on that country. Now would you say that, in order to avoid trouble, in order to avoid expense, in order to avoid what is bloodguiltiness, the British Government, representing your interests, ought to take no notice of that state of things, ought to leave the King of Burmah alone, and ought not to care whether British industries are plundered or whether

British subjects are murdered? Well, of course, the result of a policy like that would be that a prosperous and valuable dependency already under the power of the Crown would be absolutely ruined, and a most lucrative trade would be altogether arrested. If you applied to Upper Burmah the policy of the late Government with regard to Egypt, the result would surely happen that your industries would be arrested and the development of that dependency would be stopped. I want to know whether the arresting of British trade with Burmah and the stoppage of all development of British Burmah would revive British trade or give employment to the unemployed. On the other hand, a firm and resolute policy applied to Burmah will not only protect existing British interests, but may, if it is wisely guided, wisely persevered in, and not interrupted, offer such an extraordinary development to British manufacturers that it is possible there are many in this hall who may live to see the day when British commerce will be again enjoying those leaps and those bounds which Mr. Gladstone some years ago was so eloquent about. I must say I was very much amused with the speech which Sir Charles Dilke made the other day in Chelsea. He expressed the utmost solicitude for fear the present Government should not be cultivating sufficiently friendly relations with the great Empire of China. The policy of Sir Charles Dilke and his colleagues in the late war with China and France was to allow French ships to coal and provision and supply themselves in British ports in order that they might more effectually destroy and bombard Chinese sea-coast towns and ports. That was Sir Charles Dilke's idea of cultivating friendly relations with the Empire of China. Just for one moment look at India. India is your one great free market, it is the one great port of the world where your manufacturers enter without being hindered by any duties or by any other hindrance. Now, Mr. Bright, in a speech which he made in Somersetshire the other day, the general tenour and contents of which almost any Tory could agree with, made one remark which members of the Tory party would not agree with. He said that the little dispute with Russia was not worth a farthing. Well, the little dispute with Russia carried on under Mr. Gladstone's Government involved more or less directly the prosperity of India; and India is worth more than a

farthing to the English people. Without India the unemployed in Birmingham would reach such enormous numbers as to become perfectly dangerous to social order. If we had gone to war with Russia in the spring this would have been the reason—viz., that the English people will not tolerate that the safety, or the security, or the prosperity of India, the one great free and open market for British goods, shall be even so much as threatened by any foreign Power.

“WHAT EVIL HAVE THEY DONE?”

I have endeavoured to take advantage of your indulgence to place before you some ideas which may lead you to work out for yourselves the extraordinary close connection which exists between a prosperous trade and a wise foreign policy. But now take Mr. Chamberlain's speeches, and I take his speeches because I do not want to blink the situation in any way. I recognize that Mr. Chamberlain is the leader of our opponents. Lord Hartington and Mr. Goschen and Lord Derby and people of that kind are of such an irresolute and of such a doubting and negative frame of mind that they are absolutely unable to lead; they can only reluctantly and sulkily follow. Mr. Chamberlain I take as the leader of our opponents in the country and in this town of Birmingham, and therefore I draw your attention to his speeches. Tell me if in his speeches you can discover a trace or a sign or a shadow of an indication that he cares one rush about those things which I have been endeavouring to put before you? His mind appears to me, to judge from the speeches which he has made, almost entirely occupied with the development of a political organization which is to crush both Whigs and Tories, and to crush out all freedom from English political life; and his mind is also occupied with a variety of exploded Socialistic theories, with a variety of dreams, the equitable division of property which he proposes, or professes to propose, to carry into effect by some curious and rather eccentric legislation. Such, to my mind, is one aspect and one view, and perhaps the chief view, of the state of things which you are called upon to consider and to decide. Mr. Chamberlain appeals to you to overthrow Lord Salisbury's Government. He appeals to you to overthrow the present Government of the Queen. Answer to that appeal, and you must reply, “Why, what evil have they done?”

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